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WHAT OCTOBER SURPRISE?

But the truth is, the conspiracy as currently postulated is a total fabrication. None of the evidence cited to support the October Surprise stands up to scrutiny. The key sources on whose word the story rests are documented frauds and impostors.

BY STEVEN EMERSON AND JESSE FURMAN

MICHAEL WALZER: THE LIMITS OF MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY

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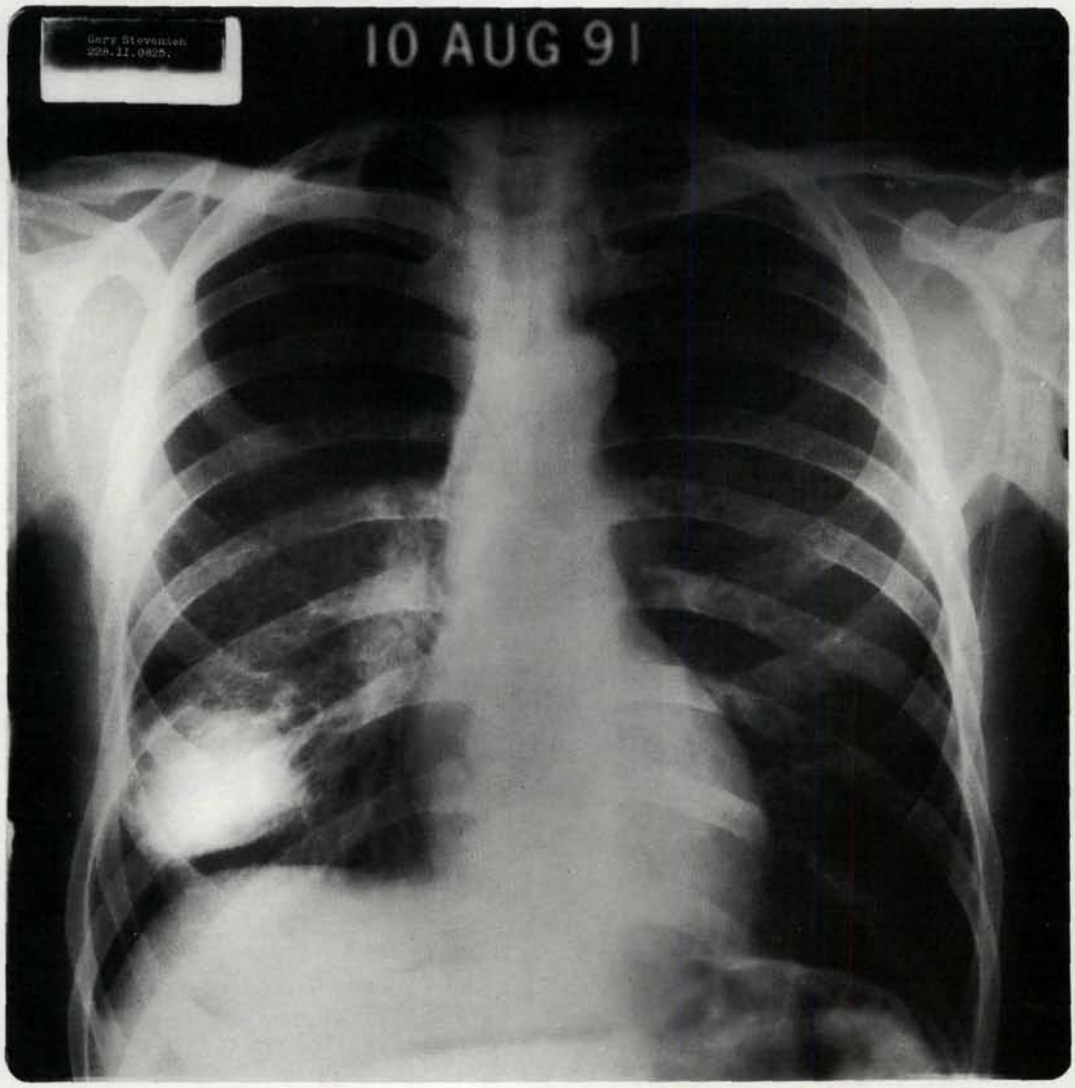

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FROM WASHINGTON

Design your own

It was a black day in 1985 when Dan Rostenkowski was seduced by respectability. I didn't think so at the time. Like other advocates of tax reform, I was delighted when the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee abandoned a lifetime of Chicago machine politics and Washington interest group hackery. His famous "write Rosty" TV address, endorsing reform efforts, won him plaudits for his high-mindedness and bipartisanship from which he apparently has never recovered.

Now Rostenkowski stands as perhaps the principal obstacle to Democratic efforts to seize the political offensive with a tax cut for the middle class. He worries that it would be irresponsible, given the deficit. He worries that it might become the occasion for new loopholes. And perhaps he is not as eager as he ought to be, now that he's so chummy with the Republican president, to put his pal on the spot.

Less mysteriously, President Bush is also striking a statesmanlike posture. "I'm not going to jump in and take steps out of some congressional panic," he says in his delightful way. "I will fight against legislation that will ... further burden the young people of this country with more and more debt." Further is right. No such statesmanlike concern arose from those quarters over the past decade's tax cuts for the well-to-do.

By now there are so many overlapping tax cut proposals floating around Washington from both parties that it's best to think of them as one big Chinese restaurant menu. Design a meal to suit your own taste.

In column one are the tax breaks themselves. Choose one or more. There's Pat Moynihan's old standby, cutting the Social Security payroll tax. There's a per-child tax credit for families, either refundable to those who don't pay taxes (Tom Downey and Al Gore) or not (Lloyd Bentsen). There's an expansion of individual retirement accounts (Bentsen, various Republicans). And of course there's a tax break for capital gains—either in general (Bush) or in some selective way (various Democrats).

In column two are methods of payment. Choose one. There's raising taxes on the wealthy (Downey and Gore). There's slicing the military budget (Bentsen). Or there's "Put it on my tab" (almost everyone else).

In column three are reasons for the exercise, crass politics apart. Choose any or all. There's reducing the tax burden on the middle class, which is higher now than before tax cutting came into fashion in 1978. There's jump-starting a stalled economy. And there's increasing saving and investment for long-term growth.

So. What shall we have? One problem is that all these dishes take time to prepare and—however delicious going down—time to digest as well. They are unlikely to have any short-term stimulus effect on the economy. This is especially true if they are honestly paid for with spending cuts or compensating tax increases, in which case the net stimulus is nil.

The two proposals aimed at long-term growth—expanding IRAs and the capital gains cut—are both snake oil. IRA contributions are already deductible for most people. The prosperous people who don't now qualify will just take the deduction for money they're saving anyway. The net effect on national savings—after subtracting the cost to the federal treasury—is likely to be negative. And if expanding IRAs did lead to increased savings, that would mean decreased spending—and so much less short-term stimulus. This is the bind a decade of Reaganomics has gotten us into.

The capital gains argument is old and hoarse. The case against a capital gains break, fairness aside, is that the tax code should be as neutral as possible, neither encouraging nor discouraging one form of economic activity compared with others. Let the market work. For that reason, a capital gains cut "balanced" by an increase in the top ordinary tax rate, as some are suggesting, is a particularly foolish combination. What produces tax shelters, empty office buildings, and other economically wasteful activity is the size of the differential between favored and unfavored categories.

Proliferating such categories—which is what various Democratic attempts to "target" a capital gains break would do—is simply an invitation to more shelter malarkey. "New" investments versus "old" investments, long-term versus short-term, investments in this versus investments in that: all such rules presume that the government can outguess

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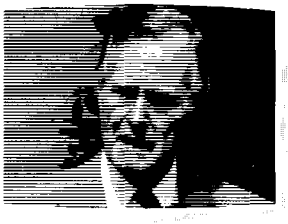

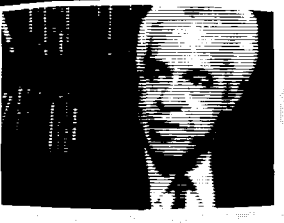

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Events to Look For

OCTOBER 25
Harvard University — JFK School
Debate between RNC Chairman Clay Yeutter and DNC Chairman Ron Brown

NOVEMBER 2
Iowa Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner
Des Moines, Iowa
Speakers: Democratic Presidential Candidates

NOVEMBER 2
New Hampshire Democratic Party Mid-Term Convention — Manchester, New Hampshire
Speakers: Democratic Presidential Candidates

92 ELECTION

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CORRESPONDENCE

Protecting the 'innocent'

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg's ill-concealed contempt for Kimberly Bergalis and her family is galling ("The Accuser," October 21). To be sure, Ms. Bergalis has taken up a dubious cause in choosing to support mandatory AIDS tests for health care workers. But one can hardly blame her or her family for their outrage over the fact that a simple visit to the dentist resulted in a death sentence. I do not believe that homosexuals or drug users who contract AIDS are "guilty" and that Ms. Bergalis is "innocent." But any rational adult can distinguish between someone who has unprotected homosexual sex with a partner (or partners) he or she may know nothing about or a drug addict who chooses to share a needle with a stranger, and a woman who is infected by her dentist or a baby that contracts AIDS from its mother. Those in the former group are in some sense culpable—they took a risk, and it blew up in their face. That is not to say that all AIDS victims don't deserve care and compassion. But forgive me if I reserve my deepest sympathies for those who choose not to gamble with their lives, and lose anyway. It is a pity Mr. Weisberg found the sight of Kimberly Bergalis testifying before Congress to be a "sickening spectacle." Some of us found it inspiring.

RUSSELL EVANSEN
Madison, Wisconsin

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg sneeringly refers to Kimberly Bergalis's sexual purity in one sentence and then asserts in the next: "There is some evidence uncovered by the Centers for Disease Control, largely ignored by the press, that suggests she is not" a virgin. What has that to do with anything about this dying young woman? Ms. Bergalis is dying from a virus that is substantially identical to the one that infected her late dentist; on the basis of this DNA fingerprinting, a reluctant medical bureaucracy has concluded that, whatever her sexual behavior, she had been almost certainly infected by him during a routine tooth extraction.

Until reading this piece of stealth journalism, it had seemed to me that, as Ms. Bergalis is one of the few individuals to contract AIDS from a health care provider, we should at least accord her views a decent, and dare I say respectful, listening. Mr. Weisberg's article was a hateful exercise in character assassination.

P. C. BYRNES
Palo Alto, California

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg addresses Kimberly Bergalis's message as a political civil rights agenda instead of as a public health problem. He clearly fails to understand that the patient and the health care worker have the absolute right to know what harm can be caused from each other. Each needs protection from the other by mandatory HIV and hepatitis B testing because volunteerism has failed, and because universal precautions do not provide for universal safety. Mr. Weisberg's contention that I chose not to travel with Kimberly on the train to Washington because I did not want "to miss a chance to appear on 'Oprah' " is a continuation of his mix of fact and fiction. "Oprah" was taped in Chicago two weeks prior to Kimberly's train journey.

SANFORD F. KUVIN, M.D.
Palm Beach, Florida

Jacob Weisberg replies:

According to my notes, Dr. Kuvin told me he missed the train to appear on CNN's "Sonya Live," not "Oprah." My apologies for the error.

Low life

To the editors:

I recently was asked by a newspaper to review Luc Sante's book *Low Life.* But as I have my book on Damon Runyon and his era in New York out, I turned down the newspaper because I said it would be a conflict of interest.

Suddenly I find in TNR a review of my Runyon book by Mr. Sante ("Mean Streets," October 21). At the end he makes cheap remarks about me. Mr. Sante does not have a standard to his name.

He also does rewrites on Herbert Asbury's *The Gangs of New York,* on which we all were raised.

JIMMY BRESLIN
New York, New York

Irresolution 242

To the editors:

Eugene Rostow's article on U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 ("Resolved," October 21) distorts history. Professor Rostow may think he "helped produce" Resolution 242, but in fact he had little if anything to do with it. Resolution 242 had two authors, Arthur Goldberg and Lord Caradon, the then U.S. and British ambassadors to the U.N.; all the many others who have claimed a hand in it were essentially onlookers. The resolution was, without question, deliberately intended to be ambiguous; its sponsors knew that that was the only way they could hope to win approval for it. The deletion of the article "the" before "occupied territories" was intended to leave room for some territorial adjustments in Israel's favor, but it was U.S. policy at the time and for several years afterward that such changes would be no more than minor.

The argument that Israel satisfied the withdrawal requirements of the resolution by giving up Sinai is without historical or legal foundation. It was clearly the intention of the drafters of Resolution 242 that it should apply to not just Sinai but, at the very least, also to the West Bank. Both Mr. Goldberg and Secretary of State Dean Rusk told King Hussein that the United States would use its influence to obtain territorial compensation from Israel for any West Bank lands ceded by Jordan to Israel. These assurances persuaded the king to acquiesce in Resolution 242 when it was approved by the Security Council.

From 1967 to 1977 Israel's Mapai and Labor Party prime ministers and foreign ministers all accepted that Resolution 242 applied to the West Bank as well as to Sinai. The first Israeli government to contend that it did not was that of Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

DAVID A. KORN
Washington, D.C.

The writer is a former State Department office director for Israel and Arab-Israeli affairs.

Down the other path

To the editors:

In "So-So DeSoto" (October 7) Tina Rosenberg underestimates the effect of government regulation and law on people's ability to earn a living in almost all of South America. I have done a little business in Brazil, which has roughly the same economic policies as Peru. Brazil's central government has passed laws dictating policy on everything from divorce settlements to hirings and firings to lunch breaks. The various levels of government demand a multitude of permits and documentation to conduct even rather ordinary business. It has become almost impossible to do business legitimately, and the government employees who are supposed to enforce these decrees use them to solicit bribes in exchange for looking the other way.

Ms. Rosenberg belittles Mr. DeSoto by claiming that he treats the informals as "the Henry Fords of tomorrow." But most of these people would simply like

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 18, 1991

THE SLUMP HUMP

Recessions, economic conservatives used to tell us, can be good for you. Not that the White House has noticed. In a panic over having the worst growth record of any president since the Great Depression, George Bush is recklessly casting about for devices to goose the growth rate. Some of what he's contemplating is irresponsible, some is ineffectual, and some works against cutting the federal budget deficit, the only reliable long-term economy tonic there is.

The president's first take on the recession was that it wasn't happening; his second, that it was over; his third, that it was something that would correct itself. Unlike many of this president's utterances, some of these statements he may have actually believed, based on advice from wishful-thinking aides. As he presented his third formulation, he urged the Federal Reserve to reduce interest rates. The Fed obliged. Interest rates have come down. But this has had no tangible effect on the recession. Consumers and producers are not borrowing to spend or invest because they are already drowning in debt; banks aren't lending because they are trying to reduce portfolios of weak real estate loans they built up in the 1980s; companies are using the competitive climate of weak demand to streamline even further, rather than hire more workers.

The administration moved irresponsibly on October 8 to loosen up lending. Banks were allowed to upgrade the value of real estate loans on their books and appeal to Washington if they didn't like the way regional examiners ruled on the value of their holdings. The Bush administration's response to a recession caused in part by irresponsible lending policies in the last decade is, apparently, to encourage more irresponsible lending.

And now the president is presiding over a spat in his Cabinet over whether to come up with a "growth package" consisting of a capital gains tax cut, tax-favored "enterprise zones" in poverty areas, and expanded IRAs to encourage savings. The package is being pushed by Republican supply-siders, led by Housing Secretary Jack Kemp, Texas Senator Phil Gramm, and House leader Newt Gingrich. It is resisted by White House traditionalists led by budget director Richard Darman and chief of staff John Sununu because it would mean breaking open last year's budget agreement with Congress, which Messrs. Darman and Sununu say will open the floodgates to Democratic spending proposals.

The Democrats have been utterly disingenuous about the recession, promising middle-class tax breaks that will be financed either by cuts elsewhere (mainly in defense) or by tax increases on rich people, neither of which will provide any net fiscal stimulus and may even deepen the recession (insofar as defense workers will lose jobs faster than middle-class consumers will spend their tax cuts). Last January President Bush urged Congress to pass a $110 billion, five-year highway bill. Had Congress done so with dispatch, spending on infras-

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tructure would have strengthened demand in the economy a bit. The two houses each voted to increase the funds but still haven't passed a final bill and face a contentious House-Senate conference before they can. Meanwhile, states are running out of federal highway and transit funds, contracts aren't being let, and workers are being laid off. Republicans accuse Congress of *wanting* a prolonged recession to help them in the 1992 election. They may have a point.

What to do? Instead of playing veto politics, Congress and the president should come to terms on an extension of unemployment benefits for those hardest hit by the recession, but the rest of us are simply going to have to grimace and ride this recession out. Recessions happen. They actually help to reduce bloat and induce streamlining. In this case, what is bloated is debt—personal, corporate, federal, state, and national—and we will get out of it when we have all paid down what we owe and can buy again. This applies especially to the federal government. Our low growth now is a direct function of its fiscal irresponsibility over the past eleven years. The deadening economic truth is that large fiscal deficits do not suddenly kill an economy: they slowly cripple it.

Neither the administration nor Congress should cast around for Keynesian stimulation devices to boost the economy. The supply-siders' proposed capital gains tax cut is particularly misguided. As we've written many times before, it distorts the tax neutrality of the only genuine economic policy achievement of the last decade, the 1986 tax reform, and, in the long term, will actually add to our deficit burden, not relieve it.

Instead of tailoring federal policy to the short-term goal of fighting this recession, the administration and Congress ought to be planning to set the U.S. economy straight for the long term by reducing the deficit and freeing up capital for private investment. Some taxes need to be raised: on gasoline, on Social Security benefits. Some tax breaks—especially on mortgage interest—should be reduced. The vast sums wasted on agricultural subsidies and government support for energy companies and other corporate interests should be recouped. Additional savings can come from defense reductions, cancellation of NASA's space station and the superconducting supercollider, and paring of the federal bureaucracy. The budget process should be amended so that all current expenditures are paid for in the year they are incurred and deficits are run only for productivity-enhancing investments such as infrastructure projects, child health, education, training, and research.

None of this is politically easy, but cutting the federal deficit is the single most important economic objective faced by the federal government. Interest on the debt is now consuming a larger slice of the budget than either defense or Social Security. Each report on the future of the deficit—even factoring in big gains from defense cuts—predicts higher deficits than already envisaged. The Congressional Budget Office's latest projection for 1996 is 2.6 percent of GNP, compared with a projection of 1.3 percent last January. No amount of administration blather will make that figure go away. And each month the problem goes unsolved compounds the future dilemma.

Fundamentally, America's problem is not that the economy isn't growing now, but that for the last twenty years our rates of savings, investment, and productivity growth have all trailed those of our major competitors. The major drag on all these is the federal budget deficit. The task facing the U.S. government is to remove this encumbrance, not to concoct gimmicks to make 1992 safe for incumbent politicians.

NOTEBOOK

TAKING A STAND: "If you ask me if I would like to go out there, leave my job and go to work for this sheik when I get through being president, no, I wouldn't like to do that." —President Bush, October 25, commenting on White House staffer Ed Rogers's job offer, representing a Saudi implicated in the BCCI scandal. Rogers insightfully inferred that the president didn't think he should take the job, and backed out. Readers are reminded of our invitation to submit any egregiously crass, dumb, or incoherent comments made (in the public record) by the president of the United States. We'll continue to publish them in this space.

SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE: Roger Fisher, the negotiations specialist who wrote *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements Without Giving In*, has solved the Arab-Israeli crisis. Despite the fundamental disagreement about whether to create a Palestinian state, or cede the occupied territories, Fisher explained in a *New York Times* op-ed last week that the crisis could be easily solved. The key is to have a small team of outsiders, preferably Canadians or Scandinavians, working on drafts of two possible settlements. One would be based on the creation of a Palestinian state, the other would not. The two plans would then be submitted to the U.N. Security Council for arbitration—and bingo, peace. Certainly Yitzhak Shamir will have no objection to an independent Palestinian state if the U.N. decides on it. Why didn't someone think of this before?

FIVE WEEKS AND COUNTING: Holding your breath, waiting for the U.N. to repeal Resolution 3379, the "Zionism is racism" resolution? Let it out—slowly. President Bush, in his September 23 speech to the U.N. General Assembly, said he wanted it revoked by the end of this session, which, happily for him, is not until September 1992. The Israelis have drafted a one-sentence resolution revoking the resolution, but

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they're reluctant to bring it to a vote until they're sure it will pass as is. The United States is trying to drum up support for revocation among Third World nations, whose support is critical. Meanwhile, Arab states, appropriating the Israeli argument about loan guarantees, claim that repeal of Resolution 3379 now would constitute an unfair interference in the delicate peace conference negotiations. The upshot? You guessed it.

SAY LOUDER, PLEASE: The media largely yawned through Bill Clinton's speech at Georgetown University last week, which called on everyone from corporate execs to welfare recipients to exercise personal responsibility and quit various forms of dependency. And although we liked the message, we can see the media's point. Clinton implied he'd limit the tax deductibility of CEO pay and corporate investments overseas, but he didn't say it. He hinted that welfare recipients should get their checks cut off after two years, but he didn't declare it. He blamed George Bush for racial strife in this country, but he let the out-of-touch civil rights lobby off completely. The only way Clinton is going to win disaffected Democrats back to the party (or get attention for his good ideas) is to make some people angry. This sort of subtlety won't work.

HE'S BACK: "Those that tried to bury [Anita Hill] too soon are like those that tried to bury Jesus too soon. She was buried on Friday but by Sunday, the stone was rolled away and there was new life and new hope and resurrection. So her crucifixion by that all-white upper-middle-class and wealthy male Senate will not last very long." —Jesse Jackson on the Clarence Thomas hearings

INTRODUCING CLARENCE X: Of all the reactions to the Thomas hearings, one of the least noticed—and most interesting—was that of the black Muslim press. For the most part, they backed Thomas. The Chicago-based *Muslim Journal* saw the hearings as showing that "white men must subconsciously continue to think that they have to come to the rescue of the black woman and save her from the black man," and that "white males continue to promote the African-American female over African-American males." As for Hill's charges, the paper dryly commented, "If this is what Anita Hill considers a true, traumatic experience, then God forbid that a high wind should come her way." The paper's solution to the problem of sexual harassment? The same as Saudi Arabia's: "When a man and a woman who are not married sit alone in closed places, the prophet advises us that the third party is Satan." The *Journal* did, however, find one white man with a good record. It praised Tom Brokaw's call for forty-eight hours of meditation to follow the hearings. Amen. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

A WASP THING

By Fred Barnes

When President Bush met with six Republican senators in the Oval Office on October 23, he was fanatical on one point. "I really do mean it," he said. "I'll sign a [civil rights] bill if you satisfy my terms." When Senate Republican leader Bob Dole predicted the president would have enough votes to sustain a veto, Bush demurred: "I'd rather sign a bill I can live with than veto one I can't." At a press conference on October 25, Bush announced a civil rights compromise and interjected four times that he'd always wanted to sign a bill: "I have not liked these characterizations that I really didn't want a civil rights bill. I wanted it all along."

OK, OK, it's true. Contrary to popular belief, Bush wanted a civil rights bill. He was never comfortable with the quota issue. It put him at odds with a group whose friendship he craves, moderate and liberal black Republicans. And it clashed with his goal of winning a considerably bigger chunk of the black vote in 1992 than the measly 10 percent he got in 1988. Yes, he frequently labeled the Democratic civil rights bill a "quota bill." John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, and counsel Boyden Gray had persuaded Bush that the bill would force employers to hire by the numbers to avoid lawsuits they couldn't win. But he implored Sununu and Gray to bring him "a non-quota civil rights bill." When presented on October 24 with one slightly less likely to produce quotas than the Democratic bill, he jettisoned many of his other demands and signed on. "I can't tell you how pleased I am," he said. He wasn't kidding.

Bush was right that the civil rights controversy, if alive in 1992, might hinder his courting of black voters. And the quota issue would give black leaders a ground on which to accuse him of playing anti-black, racial politics. "Getting civil rights off the table helps," says a White House official. "It takes away some of the ability of black leaders to demagogue Bush and scare black voters away."

But my guess is that Bush would have been receptive to a minimally acceptable civil rights bill even if he weren't scheming for black votes next year. There's a large residue of WASP Republicanism in Bush that makes him sentimental on race. He can't stand to have blacks, especially old-line black Republicans, mad at him. And they were. William Coleman, who was transportation secretary in the Ford administration, was critical of Bush's attacks on the Democratic civil rights bill. So was

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Arthur Fletcher, Bush's choice to head the Civil Rights Commission. So was Washington attorney Vernon Jordan, whom Bush regards as a friend.

Worse, the only black in Bush's Cabinet, Secretary Louis Sullivan of health and human services, let Bush know he disagreed sharply too. Sullivan and two other black Bush appointees, Social Security Administrator Gwen King and Bonnie Newman, director of the Office of Personnel Management, traveled to Kennebunkport in August 1990 to lobby Bush against a veto of the Democratic civil rights bill. Bush vetoed the bill anyway, citing the quota argument. This fall Sullivan tried to see Bush privately to discuss the bill. "Sununu got ticked off at Sullivan's insistence," says a White House official. Sullivan rightly concluded that Sununu was purposely blocking his access to Bush. Sununu feared Sullivan might influence Bush to cave on civil rights.

Invoking the quota issue was an aberration for Bush. Though Gray and Sununu convinced him it was legitimate, Bush was surprised that his position proved enormously popular. But Bush has hardly been zealous in exploiting the quota theme. When Michael Williams, the black assistant secretary of education, proposed to ban blacks-only college scholarships, Bush declined to back him. Nor has he done anything to get rid of race-norming practices at the Labor Department. And he hasn't challenged the guidelines for federal contracts that all but mandate hiring by racial quota.

Bush prefers to woo blacks in conventional fashion. He named a black to the Supreme Court to replace Thurgood Marshall. Bush said race had nothing to do with his selection of Clarence Thomas, but even White House aides didn't believe that. In September Bush reversed his own solicitor general, Kenneth Starr, on the administration's position on funding of black colleges. Starr was forced to file a new brief arguing that the equal protection clause requires that black colleges be funded equally. "Suggestions to the contrary in our opening brief no longer reflect the position of the United States," the new version said. Bush ordered the change after meeting with James Cheek, former Howard University president, and others on the President's Board of Advisers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Despite the weak economy, Bush's popularity among blacks remains high—for a Republican. The Thomas confirmation fight polarized the black community, with a solid majority supporting the Bush nominee. That promoted "a great deal of excitement at the White House about the possibility of an enhanced black vote," says an official. Polls indicate that substantial gains are possible. In a Gallup Poll conducted in mid-October, Bush got 44 percent of the non-white vote in a match-up with Mario Cuomo, who got 46 percent. In another poll, 20 percent of blacks said they intend to vote for Bush against any Democrat next year. In a survey by ABC News on October 21, Bush's approval rating among blacks was 48 percent, compared with 46 percent disapproval.

Where does this leave the quota issue? Republican consultant Jeffrey Bell says Bush never intended to use it in his re-election campaign. Of course Bush never intended to use Willie Horton and the Massachusetts furlough program as an issue in 1988 against Michael Dukakis either. Then he found himself behind, and qualms about a race-tinged issue vanished. The same is true for 1992. If he's behind, Bush advisers won't have any trouble talking him into playing the quota card. He'd rather be uncomfortable than defeated. •

The civil rights bill's loopholes?

FINE PRINT

By Paul Gewirtz

Last week's agreement on a compromise civil rights bill won virtually everything that civil rights advocates first sought two years ago: the legislative reversal of six Supreme Court decisions on employment discrimination. What is especially fascinating to those who have watched the long struggle to produce a bill is how the agreement treats the most contested issue, the disparate impact approach to proving discrimination.

Under that approach, established by the Supreme Court in *Griggs* v. *Duke Power Company* but gutted by the Court in the 1989 case *Wards Cove* v. *Atonio*, an employment practice may be actionable discrimination if it has a more adverse effect on certain groups than others, whether or not discriminatory intent produced the effect. In the new compromise, agreement on this thorny matter was made possible by a number of textual ambiguities, with the various parties hoping they had laid the groundwork for favorable Court interpretations in the future. Indeed, although the new bill is most plausibly read as a major victory for those advocating a broad version of the disparate impact test, one can see in the final deal a bid by administration lawyers to give the Supreme Court a handle for reading the act narrowly.

The new agreement provides that once plaintiffs show a disparate impact, the employer must "demonstrate that the challenged practice is job related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity." Thus the two main goals of those who sought to reverse *Wards Cove* seem to be achieved. First, the employer, not the plaintiff, has the burden of proving whether there's enough justification for an employment practice having a disparate impact. Second, the employer's burden is strict: the employer must show that all job selection criteria having a disparate impact are related to the performance of the job in question, not simply to

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Ask the Teachers

By Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers

Many people assume that private schools get much better results with their students than public schools, and it stands to reason that they would. Private schools don't have to worry about bureaucratic regulations. They don't have to take students they don't want and are free to kick out the ones who aren't working or who cause trouble. Private school parents make more money and are better educated than public school parents, and both of these facts influence student achievement. We hear, too, that teaching is much better in private schools because there are no teacher unions or collective bargaining or tenure. So it's shocking to look at the results of the recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math exam and find that, when private school students graduate from high school, they do almost as poorly as kids graduating from public schools.

How can this be so? I've already suggested one possibility in a recent column: Our students don't know very much because they don't work very much. High school students quickly discover that they will graduate from high school no matter how little they do. They also know that a high school diploma will get them some job or admission to some college, even if they are illiterate and innumerate. Since they can get what they want without working, it's no surprise that youngsters in both public and private schools do very little work and achieve at very low levels.

But there are other possible explanations that need to be examined. Private school supporters often paint an unflattering picture of teaching in public schools, where teachers are, they say, immobilized by regulations and teacher unions. Private schools, on the other hand, are said to be more like freewheeling, scholarly academies where teachers can live the life of the mind.

Now, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education has produced a study, "Characteristics of Stayers, Movers, and Leavers: Results from the Teacher Followup Survey, 1988-89," that allows us to take a closer look at some of these notions about public and private school teaching.

Contrary to what we might predict, there is much greater teacher turnover in private and parochial schools than in public schools. Between 1987-88 and 1988-89, 5.6 percent of public school teachers left teaching in comparison with 12.7 percent in private schools. That 12.7 percent, if consistent, would give private schools an attrition rate of over 60 percent in five years. In any case, it's more than twice that of public schools.

But how different are public and private schools? One way to find out is to ask teachers who've worked in these schools, which is what the survey does. And while there are differences, the degree to which public and private school teachers agree in their complaints is striking. Take the teachers who gave "dissatisfaction with teaching" as one of their main reasons for leaving the profession:

- 26.4 percent of public school teachers and 22.2 percent of private school teachers complained about inadequate support from the administration.
- 8.0 percent of public and 6.4 percent of private school teachers said there was not enough opportunity for professional advancement.
- 7.6 percent of public and 3.2 percent of private school teachers spoke about a lack of influence over school policies and practices.
- 1.3 percent of public and 2.8 percent of private school teachers questioned the professional competence of their colleagues.
- 3.6 percent of public and 7.7 percent of private school teachers complained about generally poor working conditions.
- 2.9 percent of public and 2.6 percent of private school teachers said classes were too large.

It's no surprise that a much larger percentage of private school teachers than public school teachers cited dissatisfaction with salaries—7.3 percent public and 16.1 percent private. But the figures on student discipline are surprising: 7.5 percent of public school and 16.5 percent of private school teachers called this a problem.

There's an unexamined assumption that private schools are far superior to public schools.

When people think about the differences in atmosphere between public and private schools, they usually have in mind a contrast as stark as the one between a diploma mill and Harvard University. Public schools, they assume, are bureaucratic, rule-oriented places where no one cares what happens; private schools are institutions where learning is truly valued and teachers are treated like scholars in medieval universities. This survey indicates that, when you question public and private school teachers who have left their schools or left the profession, their complaints are not all that different.

When people talk about private school choice, there's often an unexamined assumption that private schools are far superior to public schools. The first shock was that NAEP test scores don't bear this out. The second one is that the complaints of teachers who quit or switched schools don't differ significantly between public and private schools. Before we base any important decisions on the presumed superiority of private schools, we need to look at it more closely; it could turn out to be largely imaginary.

For a free copy of "Characteristics of Stayers, Movers, and Leavers," call 1-800-424-1616.

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vaguely defined business goals.

This second requirement represents a flat-out rejection of the administration's core legal position. The administration has long argued that employers should be allowed to justify hiring standards where they predict better job performance *or* promote other business goals. The language of the compromise rejects that position: job qualification standards must be *job*-related. Indeed, the "or" in the administration's proposal has become an "and"—the new agreement provides that the employer must show not only that the practice is "job related for the position in question" but *also* "consistent with business necessity." Although it's not certain what that second phrase adds in this context, civil rights lawyers will surely argue that it must mean something, and that it imposes an extra requirement on employers causing disparate impacts. The most plausible reading is that whereas the first phrase requires that the qualification standard be related to the job, the second phrase ("consistent with business necessity") addresses the nature of the required relationship and insists that the relationship to the job be a substantial one. (The language is listed word-for-word from the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has been interpreted to mean roughly this.)

But the meaning of this new language isn't as certain as it might have been, which suggests an important fact about the compromise: it was secured, as compromises often are, by introducing new ambiguities into the bill. Prior to the agreement with the president, the Danforth bill had spelled out the disparate impact test in much greater detail. Where once there were several hundred words, now there are eighteen. The greater clarity of the prior Danforth proposal was "pro-employer" in some respects, since it gave more explicit leeway to employers than the new compromise (for example, it explicitly allowed employers to screen for "behavior" that wasn't actual job performance and to hire with an eye to a future "class of jobs" the employee might hold; the new compromise doesn't mention these things). But the old version also had some clearer "pro-plaintiff" features as well, putting more explicit restrictions on employers trying to justify their selection criteria (for example, not any relationship to the job would do; the employer would have to show a "manifest relationship"). These issues will now have to be hammered out in the crucible of court litigation.

A revealing example of new ambiguities are the small but telling revisions in the preamble of the bill. The old Danforth proposal provided that one purpose of the act is

> to overrule the proof burdens and meaning of business necessity in *Wards Cove Packing Co.* v. *Atonio* and to codify the proof burdens and the meaning of business necessity used in *Griggs* v. *Duke Power Co.*

The new language provides that the purpose of the bill is

> to codify the concepts of "business necessity" and "job related" enunciated by the Supreme Court in *Griggs* v. *Duke Power Co.* ... and in the other Supreme Court decisions prior to *Wards Cove Packing Co.* v. *Atonio.*

The administration strongly pushed for this change, which does two main things: it avoids saying flatly that *Wards Cove*'s interpretation of "business necessity" is overruled, and it indicates that an entire line of cases beginning with *Griggs* is codified, not simply *Griggs* itself. The administration undoubtedly hopes to use this modification when litigating how the new act should be interpreted, and to use it to support the following argument: One pre-*Wards Cove* opinion suggests that job selection criteria may be justified in terms of business goals other than actual job performance, and another indicates that qualification standards need only have a loose relationship to the employment in question. Since the new act codifies "decisions prior to *Wards Cove*," the argument will go, the act codifies the language in these two decisions. (Actually, one opinion is only for a plurality of the Court, and may not even qualify as a Court "decision.")

There are, of course, strong answers to these arguments based on the preamble: the operative provisions of the act seem clearly to require that selection criteria be related to performance in the job position being filled, and to negate any suggestion that the relationship may be a weak one. But an ambiguity has been created, and by design. The administration's opposition to earlier versions of the bill has long rested not simply on a political calculation but also on serious policy concerns about the impact test (see "Discrimination Endgame," TNR, August 12). White House lawyers are undoubtedly hoping they have put enough into the new act to persuade the courts, when they interpret the act, that it codifies a relatively weak version of the test.

It's doubtful, I think, that a court reading the act in good faith will see the last-minute modification of the preamble as blunting the force of the operative sections of the law. But as all parties to the recent negotiations obviously appreciated, the Supreme Court, which has the final power to interpret any new civil rights laws, has already shown itself to be very cautious in endorsing broad civil rights protections. (The new law, of course, was necessitated by the Court's very narrow interpretation of existing legislation.)

The Court's narrow approach to civil rights laws is part of a more general approach to statutory interpretation emerging on the Court. Under the leadership of Antonin Scalia, the Court has insisted that Congress must speak with distinctive clarity before the Court will find enforceable statutory rights. Extending rights, Scalia emphasizes, means augmented judicial power, interference with people's liberty, and defining some social relationships in adversarial, rights-based terms. Statutory ambiguity, for Scalia, means that Congress has not done its work, has not agreed upon the scope of rights. Therefore, he will interpret ambiguous congressional statutes as not creating rights or creating rights of only the narrowest scope—rather than fill in a statute's broad outlines or resolve ambiguities in light

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of a statute's basic purposes, as judges have commonly done.

Fortunately for supporters of the disparate impact test, the new civil rights bill is sufficiently clear that the Court will probably agree that Congress has enacted a strong version of the test. But uncertainties do exist, as the White House and others surely intended. And it will be years before we learn from the Court precisely what the act has come to mean.

PAUL GEWIRTZ is professor of law at Yale Law School.

The peace process begins.

UNQUICK FIX

By Michael Walzer

What kind of a peace conference should it be? I assume that people in Washington have been thinking about this question, since it seems fairly certain that delegates from the governments currently in power in the Middle East will reach deadlock within days, if not hours, if not minutes, of their first direct encounter. And then they will turn to their American conveners for help. The American response will depend, I hope, upon some large conception of what these negotiations ought to be like. It would be a great mistake to think that the mere convening of the conference is a miracle sufficient unto itself. After the opening meeting, which was rightly celebrated with high ceremony and wide publicity, it is hard to foresee anything but trouble, for which we need to prepare ourselves.

Preparing myself, in good academic fashion, I have been reading about the extraordinary congress of diplomats that made possible the Peace of Westphalia (1648), ending the Thirty Years' War. The war between Israel and its neighbors has now been going on for forty-three years, so these are comparable time spans, producing comparable antagonisms and complexities.

It took some three years (1641-44) to plan what turned out to be two very complicated sets of meetings held in the Westphalian towns of Munster and Osnabruck, thirty miles apart. Delegates of the Catholic powers met in the first, Protestants in the second. In fact, military alliances crossed these conventional religious lines. The separate sites were necessary because the militantly Protestant Swedes refused to talk to or sit with the papal delegates. Couriers rode back and forth between the two towns; secret and not-so-secret meetings were held at various midpoints.

The Congress was preceded and frequently interrupted by intense disputes about the composition of the delegations, the titles of their members (the kings of France and Spain, for example, both claimed to be "King of Navarre" and "Duke of Barcelona," and wanted these pretensions recognized in their ambassadors), and the etiquette and ceremony of the meetings. The meetings themselves went on for four years before a settlement was reached. To indicate his readiness for a long negotiation, the French ambassador planted a garden around his lodgings.

The war continued while the delegates talked, and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the length of the Congress: diplomats marked time waiting to learn how their soldiers had fared in distant battles. But there were other reasons for a long "peace process," more integral to the negotiations themselves. First of all, the issues at stake (which had to do not only with the post-Reformation religious settlement, but also with the future character of the European state system) had no coherence, and there was no single agenda. The Congress quickly broke up into a series of conferences between different parties, working at different paces; some of them could not conclude their work until the results of all the other negotiations were known. Second, the various delegations and, often, the governments they represented were themselves divided into parties favoring peace and parties committed still, against all the odds, to total victory. Third, the disputes of etiquette and ceremony were by no means trivial; they were closely connected to the largest issues in the negotiations and therefore very hard to resolve. When diplomats argued over precedence and seating arrangements, hierarchical conceptions dating from feudal times were in fact being defended against the new doctrine of state equality. It appears that equality won out in the ceremonies of the Congress before it was established in treaty form—a nice example of indirection in diplomacy.

Finally, though many of the delegates shared a common aristocratic background, the antagonisms went very deep. It took a long time before a kind of esprit de corps developed, the product of many meetings and dinner parties. (There was famine in the Westphalian countryside, but the dinners, though morally obscene, may have been politically valuable.) Once this corporate spirit appeared, the body of diplomats—a few angry or ideological "hawks" always excepted—turned into a pressure group for a realistic settlement. The delegates did not want their large investment of time and energy and their slowly evolving mutual understandings to be wasted.

All of this is very instructive. We should be planning a similar peace conference: a long series of simultaneous and relatively independent negotiations, with attendant ceremonies and many common lunches and dinners. American diplomats might well urge a very rough and loose agenda, starting with the easier questions and permitting shifts from one thing to another when deadlocks develop. It is good that the delegates this time won't have to wait for news of battles. But the political

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and economic wars will continue unless a truce or a series of truces can be negotiated.

Perhaps some sort of truce should be the first aim of the delegates, so as to establish, as it were, the possibility of a larger peace. They might talk for a long time about reuniting families among the Druse on the Golan Heights and among Palestinians in Jordan and the occupied territories. And about postal and telephone connections and the opening of trade across Israel's borders. And about freezing settlement activity and a pause in the intifada. And about all sorts of short-term arrangements designed to make Israelis feel more secure and Palestinians more free. And only later, perhaps much later, about water rights, and land, and boundaries, and long-term security.

It is crucial not to despair early on because of the hardness of the delegates' opening positions. Camp David is not a useful precedent here, for in that negotiation the central agreement, the decision to exchange land for peace, had been reached before the formal conference began. (It still took some three years from Dayan's secret visit to Morocco to the actual signing of an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.) In this case, there is no agreement, except perhaps on the danger to all the states involved of the next war. So the delegates must move slowly toward their moment of truth. This will come, so everyone seems to believe, when Israel is forced to say whether it is prepared to withdraw from the occupied territories as it withdrew from the Sinai, and when the Arabs are forced to say whether they are prepared to offer the kind of peace that Sadat described in Jerusalem in 1977. Still, I can imagine many indirect and partial ways in which these questions might first be posed—among Israelis and Palestinians, for example, in discussions about Israeli settlements or about the intifada or in the working out of arrangements for an interim autonomy. Moments of truth need not be rushed.

But many impatient spectators, and some of the delegates themselves, chiefly on the Arab side, will be looking from the beginning for external intervention—in the form of American pressure. Intervention and pressure may well be necessary at some point in the process, but only after there is a *process*, a real negotiation between and among the parties to the conflict. Otherwise the parties, all of them, will prefer to negotiate with the United States rather than with one another. Their differences are genuine and deep, and, perhaps more important, their distrust of one another is virtually boundless. What negotiations must do, even before they bridge the differences, is to begin to alleviate the distrust.

This is a matter of special significance in the contemporary Middle East because of the democratic character of Israeli politics and the radical disunity of the Palestinians. The delegates at Munster and Osnabruck had a relatively simple task: they had to defend the compromises they reached only before their sovereign masters and the sovereign's courtly attendants and advisers. They faced no larger political test. Many of the Arab delegates today will be in exactly this position. But the Palestinians will have to find some way to rally their fractured and disorganized constituency (at least in the West Bank and Gaza), and the Israelis will almost certainly be forced into a highly divisive and raucous election. This peace conference will have to outlast the governments and leaders that begin it. Both Palestinian and Israeli participants will be severely tested, and if the peacemakers among them are to pass these tests, they will need the spectacle, as well as the reality, of the ongoing negotiations: the meetings, handshakes and common meals; the small agreements and compromises; the slowly growing sense of possibility.

All this may not work; it's not implausible to argue that Palestinian moderates are too weak to survive even the first small compromises that the conference will require, and that Likud hardliners are likely to win the coming Israeli elections. Even if these predictions turn out to be right, however, I am inclined to argue that the conference is worthwhile—in no other sense, perhaps, than as a prelude to big power intervention. For intervention, if it comes, won't make peace; it will only set the general terms of a settlement. The countries involved will still have to resume the meetings and negotiate the details, and the details will turn out to be both difficult and very important.

What makes an agreement agreeable is that it has been agreed upon—hammered out in a process of mutual accommodation between recognized and legitimate representatives of the different states and nations. Nothing is more necessary than that there be such a process and that it have a public character. Some aspects of the negotiations will have to be secret, of course, but many others must be open and accessible. Indeed, publicity is one of the things that should be negotiated early on: for it will not inspire trust in Israel if every handshake between an Arab and a Jew is banned, say, from Syrian or Saudi television; nor will it inspire trust among Palestinians if Israel's diplomats can talk with PLO officials only in deep darkness—like Protestants with the pope's men in the 1640s.

Half the people in the world will have their own peace plan (I have one ready if anyone asks). Should there be an "American plan"? Only as a way of compromising differences in serious Arab and Israeli proposals, not as an abstract realization of this or that principle. Political and moral principles help to set the larger agenda, but they cannot determine detailed outcomes. The conference will have to provide security for Israel, freedom for the Palestinians; it will, no doubt, have to settle on an exchange of territory for peace. But there is no single necessary or correct way of doing any of these things. There are many different ways, agreeable if they are agreed upon. It will be disappointing, I suppose, if it takes years of talking to reach an agreement. But we hope for decades, even centuries, of security and freedom, and against that expectation a Westphalian four years is a short time, and ceremonious and long-winded diplomacy is a small price. •

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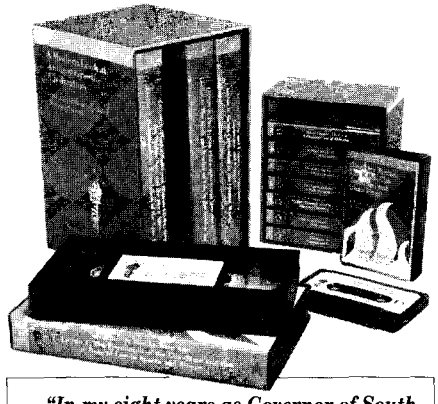

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THE CONSPIRACY THAT WASN'T

By Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman

Few op-ed pieces prove to be as popular or long-lived as the one Gary Sick wrote for *The New York Times* last April. He claimed that in October 1980 officials in Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign made a secret deal with Iran to delay the release of the American hostages until after the election. In return, the United States purportedly arranged for Israel to ship weapons to Iran. The charges of an "October Surprise" weren't new. They had been circulating in the press since 1987. But Sick, who had served on Jimmy Carter's National Security Council staff and is the author of the acclaimed *All Fall Down* (1985), an account of the 1980 Iran hostage crisis, gave new impetus to the story. So did a show the following day by PBS's "Frontline," in which Sick was featured.

When Sick first wrote about the release of the hostages in his book, he explained that there were several reasons they were freed in January 1981: Iranian enmity for Carter, the complications of unfreezing Iranian assets, the disorganization of the Iranian regime, and the protracted nature of U.S.-Iranian negotiations. But in his op-ed piece, Sick wrote that in preparation for a new book on Iran, *October Surprise* (to be published this month), he interviewed "hundreds of people" who told him about a secret Reagan-Bush hostage deal in 1980. What finally persuaded him was "the absence of contradictions on the key elements of the story" provided by his sources. Sick became convinced that William Casey, then Reagan's campaign manager, had met secretly in Madrid in the summer of 1980 with Iranian intermediaries to negotiate a secret deal, and that Casey and other officials met in Paris in October 1980, after which Iran broke off negotiations with the Carter administration. Sick also wrote that three of his sources saw then Vice President George Bush in Paris as well, but that "in the absence of further information, I have not made up my mind about this allegation."

The Sick piece and the "Frontline" story prompted a spate of alarmed editorials, an indignant request from former President Carter for a "blue-ribbon panel" to investigate the charges, and congressional inquiries into the October Surprise.

But the truth is, the conspiracy as currently postulated is a total fabrication. None of the evidence cited to support the October Surprise stands up to scrutiny. The key sources on whose word the story rests are documented frauds and imposters. Representing themselves as intelligence operatives, they have concocted allegations that are demonstrably false, and their stories, full of internal inconsistencies, are also contradictory. Almost every primary source cited by Sick or "Frontline" has been indicted or was the subject of a federal investigation prior to claiming to be a "participant" in the October Surprise. Finally, evidence we have uncovered shows that William Casey and George Bush could not have been present at the meetings alleged by the sources.

The term "October Surprise" was actually coined by Reagan campaign aides who worried in the fall of 1980 that Carter would launch an operation to free the hostages in order to win the election. Thus in the fall of 1980 members of the Reagan campaign team often met to discuss developments regarding the hostages. There was concern that Carter would do something to exploit the hostage situation, and some of the things the Republicans did—such as stealing Carter's debate book—were sleazy. But they certainly did not amount to treason, as proponents of the October Surprise have charged.

The conspiracy theory began to catch on in April 1987. On the front page of the *Miami Herald*, Alfonso Chardy reported on a secret meeting in early October 1980 with Richard Allen and Laurence Silberman, then foreign policy advisers to Reagan, and Robert McFarlane, then an aide to Senator John Tower on the Senate Armed Services Committee. The article said they "met secretly" (it was actually in the hotel lobby) for "20-30 minutes" at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C., with a "man who said he represented the Iranian government and offered to release to candidate Reagan 52 American hostages being held in Tehran." Allen told the House Foreign Affairs Committee last May that he went at the "insistence" of McFarlane, who only indicated that the meeting was about the Middle East. Although the article quoted Allen as saying that he rejected the man's offer as "absurd" and told him to deal directly with the Carter administration, the article strongly implied that this meeting was part of a new

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scandal linked to the Iran-contra affair. Allen's decision not to inform Carter officials of the meeting fueled suspicion about the story.

Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, the president of Iran from January 1980 through June 1981, was quoted as claiming that he "learned in 1981" that Iranian leaders Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammed Beheshti had collaborated with Reagan campaign aides to release the hostages. (Beheshti and Rafsanjani, bitter political opponents of Bani-Sadr, had forced him from power. Beheshti was later killed by a bomb in 1981, and Rafsanjani is now president of Iran.) Bani-Sadr also charged that the Reagan officials had promised Iran that it would receive weapons for its war with Iraq. But Bani-Sadr stipulated that the promises of weapons were *not* linked to the release of the hostages—and furthermore, he didn't know if any weapons were eventually shipped.

In early July 1987 the October Surprise got a big push from the *Nation* with Christopher Hitchens's charge that the Reagan campaign assured the Iranians that "if they kept the American hostages until after the election," the Iranians would be rewarded with arms. Hitchens quoted Barbara Honegger, a Reagan campaign researcher and low-level worker in the Reagan White House, as saying that in late October 1980 she had overheard an unidentified "staffer" say, "We don't have to worry about an 'October Surprise.' Dick cut a deal," presumably a reference to Richard Allen.

As these charges began circulating, Bani-Sadr's memory improved dramatically. On August 3 Flora Lewis reported in a *New York Times* column, based on an interview, that Bani-Sadr now held without doubt that the "Reagan campaign offered arms if the hostages were not released until after the 1980 election." He also asserted that in October 1980 his "aides found out" that Rafsanjani and Beheshti had delayed the release of the hostages, that there was a meeting between Beheshti and a "Reagan campaign official" in Paris, and that he "learned later" that Allen, Silberman, and McFarlane met with an Iranian envoy in Washington.

Bani-Sadr's memory continued to improve. On August 9, 1987, *Miami Herald* reporter Chardy quoted him as now saying that "secret contacts between Reagan and Khomeini representatives" had fixed a deal in October 1980 to free the hostages. (Note that according to Sick in a 1988 *Los Angeles Times* story, "Bani-Sadr had nothing to do with the negotiations. He was completely out of it.") The article also reported that the Reagan administration approved of, or at least condoned, Israeli arms sales to Iran in 1981. All the ingredients for the cabal were now in place.

Then, in an August 1987 interview with Leslie Cockburn for her book *Out of Control*, Bani-Sadr said that he knew ahead of time that Rafsanjani and Beheshti sent an Iranian envoy to meet with Allen and Silberman and that he even protested to Rafsanjani and Khomeini that it was "dangerous" to renege on the negotiations with Carter. Remember that initially he claimed to have no prior knowledge of any such meeting. Later he said he "learned" about the meeting in 1981. Now he was saying that he knew of the meeting ahead of time.

It got better. The following year, in a September 1988 article in *Playboy* by Abbie Hoffman and Jonathan Silvers, which painted the most comprehensive October Surprise conspiracy to date, Bani-Sadr said definitively that George Bush was the Reagan campaign official who met in Paris with Beheshti in October 1980. (A year later Bani-Sadr said he had a "document" showing that Bush was present at the meeting—but he could not disclose the document because "the life of the writer ... and the lives of many people would fall into danger.") Bani-Sadr's accusations about Bush prompted an editorial in *The Washington Post*—not especially disposed to defending Bush in general—in October 1988 that noted Bani-Sadr's motivation in "smearing Bush." The *Post* wrote, "Bani-Sadr has to hope that U.S.-Iranian relations will continue to be antagonistic if the Iranian opposition is ever to have a chance of gaining important American support. His effort to smear Bush betrays concern about tensions lessening if the Republicans stay in power."

Emboldened by the eager response to his allegation by international journalists, Bani-Sadr wrote his memoirs, which went beyond even the October Surprise conspiracy. In *My Turn To Speak: Iran, the Revolution & Secret Deals with the U.S.* (published in France in 1989, and in the United States in 1991), Bani-Sadr portrayed himself as a man victimized by the double dealings of the Khomeini regime and the Reagan campaign.

At the same time a new "source" emerged—who was fortuitously able to confirm Bani-Sadr's allegations. His name was Richard Brenneke, an Oregon businessman, and he surpassed even Bani-Sadr in his ability to recall events that he had admitted earlier he knew nothing about.

Brenneke claimed to have worked for the CIA and FBI in addition to the Mossad and the French, Italian, and other intelligence services. He first surfaced in late November 1986, immediately after the official disclosure of the Iran-contra affair, when he claimed that he personally had informed then Vice President Bush's office in February 1986 of secret details of the Iran-contra affair. Reporters flocked to Brenneke as he began propounding incredible tales of U.S. and other covert operations. For example, he was a primary source for a front-page *New York Times* story on February 2, 1987, about the "Demavand project," a purportedly classified CIA-Pentagon operation to ship billions of dollars of sophisticated weapons, including tanks, bombers, and helicopters to Iran. Brenneke, the article reported, had provided the *Times* with "documents and telexes" including a letter of reference, dated June 20, 1979, which stated that he had been employed for the CIA for thirteen years and that the CIA "found him to be thorough, competent, and very trustworthy."

The CIA and the Defense Department issued categorical denials of the story. Other reporters at the *Times* began looking into Brenneke's allegations and his background. Both began to collapse. According to a veteran *New York Times* reporter, "We soon found out that Bren-

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neke was ... an absolute liar. Even the documents he gave us were forged, including the CIA letter of reference."

At *The Portland Oregonian*, reporters were amused at Brenneke's celebrity status: the paper had reported weeks earlier that Brenneke had greatly "exaggerated" his role in arms sales, that he had said he couldn't remember if he worked at the CIA, that none of his international arms dealing ever came to fruition, and that he had been the subject of an FBI investigation for his suspected role in a check-kiting scheme and a forged airplane title report years earlier.

For the most part, however, the press was willing to suspend disbelief. ABC News quickly ran a series of "investigative" stories based on new Brenneke allegations. In April 1988 the network aired a report based on a "confidential source"—who the network later admitted to be Brenneke—alleging that in 1983 the United States, working with Israeli intelligence, secretly flew weapons to the contras *and* used the planes on their way back to transport drugs into the United States.

Newsweek followed up with a story by Robert Parry that provided even more details about Brenneke's allegations, including the charge that Donald Gregg, Vice President Bush's national security adviser (now ambassador to South Korea), was part of the drugs-for-weapons operation. Parry suggested that he had independent confirmation of the ABC allegations, but Brenneke was the only named source for both news organizations. Over the next five months Brenneke's claims were the focus of more than 200 national news stories and columns. (One of the few reporters to raise questions about Brenneke was Mark Hosenball, who wrote an article for TNR in June 1988 saying that Parry and ABC had uncritically bought the story of an unreliable witness.)

It seemed there wasn't anything Brenneke did not know. He told *The Los Angeles Times* that he supplied explosives to a PLO training camp located in western Oregon, a camp about which Oregon law enforcement knew nothing. He told the *Seattle Times* of his knowledge of Israelis training Colombian drug cartel hit squads. He told the *Detroit Free Press* that he supplied U.S. intelligence with information from an Iranian military officer that included maps of Qaddafi's headquarters two months before the United States bombed Libya in April 1986. He quickly discovered that it was possible to get away with any allegation in the national security arena: if an intelligence agency, already suspect in the public's mind, denied something, that merely reinforced the authenticity of the charges.

By late September 1988 Brenneke, having never mentioned anything about the October Surprise, suddenly emerged as the primary source of the conspiracy in the United States. His disclosures came right after he met Honegger, the former Reagan campaign aide, in August 1988. Honegger had become one of the leading champions of the October Surprise. She claimed to have her own intelligence and confidential sources who "confirmed" the conspiracy and began working on a book called *October Surprise*, published in 1989.

Honegger herself was no stranger to controversy. A believer in paranormal events (she has an unusual master's degree in "parapsychology"), she claimed a "source" with her voice contacted her in early 1980 to tell her she would get a job with the Reagan administration. She said that an intelligence officer told her that U.S. satellites parted the clouds during Reagan's inauguration to let the sun shine only on Reagan. When she resigned from the Reagan White House, she told a reporter that she had been guided by insights that she described as "channeled information ... as if it were from the future."

Honegger says in her book that she met Brenneke on August 22, 1988, in Washington. At the meeting, Brenneke told her that he had learned from his "Iranian contacts" that a secret meeting was held at the Raphael Hotel in Paris on October 19, 1980, between William Casey, Donald Gregg, Iranian arms dealer Cyrus Hashemi, and Iranian merchant Manucher Ghorbanifar. Brenneke told Honegger that he was *not* present at the Paris meeting, but that he had been in the city that weekend and that his presence there was purely "coincidental."

Honegger, who had been in touch with Bani-Sadr and was eager to substantiate his story about Bush attending the secret Paris meeting, recounted the allegations. What could Brenneke tell her about "Bush's possible participation"? she asked. Brenneke said he would "make a few phone calls to see the 'lay of the land,' " and would get back to her.

A week later the *Playboy* article hit the stands.

On September 23, 1988, Brenneke suddenly recalled that he had attended at least one of the meetings in Paris in October 1980, that there were a total of three meetings held on October 19 and 20, 1980, and that he had played a pivotal role in the October Surprise deal. Brenneke was appearing that day as a character witness at a Denver court for the sentencing of his friend Heinrich Rupp. Trained as a Nazi pilot, Rupp was a Colorado gold dealer who had been convicted of bank fraud and sentenced to forty-one years in jail. Brenneke told the court that Rupp had been prosecuted to shut him up about his involvement in flying Reagan campaign aides to Paris in October 1980.

Brenneke testified that on October 18, 1980, Rupp participated, at the request of the CIA, in a flight taking Bush, Casey, Allen, and Gregg to a meeting in Paris with Iranian representatives to work out a deal to delay the release of American hostages until after the election. He said that Rupp had been a long-time CIA pilot, and that Rupp personally flew Casey to France. Brenneke also said that he attended the third meeting, at which Casey and Cyrus Hashemi (both men were dead by the time of Brenneke's testimony) and Gregg also participated.

Brenneke went on to say that a CIA officer named Robert Kerritt had given him instructions to go to Paris. And as a result of the meetings with Casey and Bush, he claimed that he witnessed an agreement over the "logistics of transferring $40 million [in U.S. funds] for the purchase of weapons [for Iran]." Asked whether he ever

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played a "role in conveying or transferring that money," Brenneke said, "I don't believe so."

After the February 1987 *New York Times* article had appeared, Brenneke had been contacted by Jack Blum, special investigator for the Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations, headed by Senator John Kerry. He met with Brenneke for hundreds of hours, and a year and a half later Brenneke began telling newspapers that Blum and the other staffers corroborated his allegations about the October Surprise. Moreover, Brenneke testified under oath in the Rupp hearing that he had provided the October Surprise information to the Senate subcommittee and that it was later confirmed by the staffers.

Yet according to Blum and other Senate staffers, not only did Brenneke never mention the October Surprise; the subcommittee found him to be an outright liar. The committee obtained thousands of pages of documents from law enforcement and intelligence agencies and discovered, says Blum, "that nothing he said was true—he had made it up based on what he read in the newspaper or what he was told."

The Senate subcommittee released a 1,166-page report in December 1988, in which two pages are devoted to Brenneke. Among the conclusions: "The records show that Brenneke was never officially connected to U.S. intelligence." The report noted that Brenneke "began telling his stories about his 'secret' life as a spy" after being stopped by the U.S. Customs Service on his way back from Europe and asked about documents relating to arms deals. "His response was to offer to become a Customs informant," stated the report. Customs declined the offer. The report also noted that "Brenneke applied for a job with the CIA when he finished school but his application was rejected."

By May 1989 Brenneke's stories began to catch up with him. A Denver grand jury indicted him for perjury for making false declarations under oath to a federal judge in the Rupp hearing. Brenneke's trial took place in Portland, Oregon, in April 1990. A CIA official testified that not only had Brenneke and Rupp never worked for the CIA; the agency had never heard of anyone named Robert Kerritt—Brenneke's supposed contact. Secret Service agents testified that Bush had not left the country in the two weeks before the election; two of Casey's secretaries said the same thing about their boss. Then Gregg testified that on the weekend of October 18 and 19, 1980, rather than being at the Paris meetings as Brenneke claimed, he was on vacation at a beach in Delaware; on Monday, October 20, he said he was back at work at the Old Executive Office Building. He recalled that the weather was cloudy and produced a photograph of himself and his daughter on the beach. The back of the photo is stamped "October 1980" from the processing lab. The photo showed a hazy but partly sunny sky.

In response, Brenneke's lawyers produced Robert Lynott, a retired Portland TV weatherman who testified that his review of the weather reports showed there were overcast and rainy conditions most of that weekend in Delaware—and that therefore the photo must have been taken at a different time. This turned out to be the key piece of evidence on which the jury concentrated.

Following a three-week trial, Brenneke was acquitted, thanks to the prosecution's incompetence and overconfidence and the defense's success in shrouding Brenneke in the smoke and mirrors of the intelligence world. The prosecution was roundly criticized for not asking for or admitting any documentary evidence. The Secret Service agents didn't bring records to the trial, which made them vulnerable on cross examination. Casey's two secretaries admitted that Casey kept secrets from them, which rendered their testimony questionable in the minds of jurors.

Prosecutors did not introduce into evidence Gregg's datebook, which has the word "beach" penned on the October 18 weekend, or the four computerized White House memoranda that he sent from and received in his office on October 20. Thus the jury became preoccupied with the questions raised by the defense about the alleged date of the photograph. Three jurors later admitted that their "doubt" about the photograph was the main reason they had acquitted Brenneke.

Despite the litany of Brenneke's inconsistencies, October Surprise supporters touted his acquittal as proof of his veracity. Sick says: "Brenneke had the courage of his conviction in taking on the U.S. government on three key allegations [about the presence of Bush, Casey, and Gregg at the Paris meetings], and he was acquitted.... The evidence on George Bush not being in Paris is less persuasive than that of Donald Gregg. The way Bush has dealt with this is very suspicious. There is not a single shred of evidence that Bush was where he said he was." "Frontline" embraced Brenneke's trial defense that the weather conditions on the Delaware shore on October 20, 1980, were incompatible with the Gregg photo, claiming that "U.S. government documents show the weather was cold and cloudy that weekend on the Delaware shore." In fact, detailed hourly weather maps of that weekend from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration show that on Sunday afternoon weather conditions were compatible with the picture Gregg produced.

"Frontline," Sick, and October Surprise conspiracy supporters also rely on the "eyewitness testimony" of Brenneke's good friend Rupp. Weeks after Sick published his op-ed piece, in which he indirectly cited Brenneke and Rupp (though not by name), when questioned by reporters skeptical about Brenneke's credibility, he disclaimed any reliance on him. Rupp, however, was still a primary source. He has maintained that his involvement in a loan fraud, which led to the collapse of the Aurora Bank in Colorado in 1985, was actually due to the CIA, for whom he said he was working, as part of a "national security operation" related to Iran-contra.

Like Bani-Sadr and Brenneke, Rupp's sudden recall of the October Surprise came about belatedly. Only

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after his conviction for bank fraud, Rupp began telling newspapers and TV stations that he flew Casey to Paris on October 18, 1980, and insisted that Bush was present on the tarmac at the French airport. There are numerous inconsistencies in Rupp's account. He was unable to produce any proof that he worked for the CIA, and the plane he said he piloted to Paris that weekend, according to leasing company records, was actually parked in California. Furthermore, Rupp's passport (and Brenneke's too, for that matter) shows no exit from the United States or entry into France in October 1980. Rupp has told reporters he didn't know who his passengers were at the time of the flight to Paris. He claims only to have recognized the "Old Professor" six years later when Casey was shown "testifying on television" about the Iran-contra scandal (a dubious detail, seeing that Casey had a stroke a day before the televised hearings). Rupp also said it was only years later that he recognized the "tall man with the crooked eyes"—the person at the Paris airport—as George Bush. Is it conceivable that Rupp would not have recognized Bush or Casey when he saw them? After all, he claims to be a long-time CIA employee and pilot—and Bush was head of the CIA four years before. Moreover, Brenneke says that Rupp was one of "Casey's favorite pilots."

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

As for the allegations about Bush's presence in Paris on October 19 and 20, Secret Service records and contemporaneous news accounts of Bush's speeches show indisputably that he is publicly accounted for almost hourly—in numerous campaign stops—from October 15 through the late evening of October 18. On Sunday morning, October 19, according to information obtained by Gordon Crovitz of *The Wall Street Journal*, Bush had a private lunch with Judge Potter Stewart at the Chevy Chase Country Club. And Secret Service records show that agents went to the club to provide protection for Bush that Sunday morning. On the evening of October 19 Bush spoke at a campaign event at the Washington Hilton, which is substantiated by newspaper accounts. On Monday, October 20, according to a schedule released by the White House and confirmed by newspaper and wire service reports, Bush campaigned the entire day in several cities in Connecticut.

When confronted with this information, October Surprise buffs either claim that the Secret Service records were fabricated or maintain that Bush could have flown to Paris on the Concorde and technically returned eight hours later. But if he did fly via Concorde (or any other high-speed plane), it conflicts with *all* of the statements made by Rupp and Brenneke, who said that Bush and Casey had flown to Paris on October 18 on a BAC-111. Nor is it compatible with any of the statements made by the other key sources used by "Frontline" and Sick.

By any measure of honest reporting, the October Surprise conspiracy should have died long ago. But like a version of the child's game "telephone," the story had taken on a life of its own, changing and expanding as it went from source to source. More and more "eyewitnesses" began emerging who often appropriated elements of the conspiracy, swapped lies among themselves or were prodded by journalists, and then wove new tales inserting themselves as minor or major characters. Though Bani-Sadr has consistently claimed to have his own proof of the conspiracy, for his book his only evidence was excerpts from Brenneke's court statements in the Rupp hearing. An October Surprise cult emerged, fueled by entrepreneurial journalists who had made the allegations into a lucrative cottage industry. PBS's "Frontline" documentary, for example, cost about $200,000 to $250,000 to produce, paid partially by taxpayer funds.

"Frontline" touted Brenneke's acquittal on perjury charges, declaring that "the government tried and failed to prove that William Casey was not in Paris." "Frontline" and Sick did not tell the public about Brenneke's numerous misstatements, discrepancies, and prevarications, which cast doubt on the credibility of the entire October Surprise scenario. On "Frontline" Brenneke said again that Gregg and Casey traveled secretly to Paris in October 1980. (Allen had produced a videotape of his October 19 appearance on "Meet the Press," so his name did not come up this time.) But Brenneke changed his story once again. In September 1988 he testified that he did not play a role in the transfer of $40 million in weapons to Iran; on "Frontline" he said that he was instructed by Casey at the meeting to launder the $40 million through a Mexican bank and that he did so.

Rather than rely exclusively on Brenneke, Sick and "Frontline" featured new sources who they said "confirmed" each other's accounts. These included Houshang Lavi, Ari Ben-Menashe, and Jamshid Hashemi. Lavi, an Iranian-born arms dealer, claimed he was the unidentified Iranian emissary who met with Allen, McFarlane, and Silberman in Washington in early October 1980 at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel. "Frontline" quoted Lavi as saying that he witnessed Khomeini's representa-

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tives being allowed to enter NATO bases in Europe and "pick whatever they want" for shipment back to Iran.

What "Frontline" and Sick did not reveal was the following: (1) Lavi's claim to have met the three Reagan supporters has been denied by McFarlane, Allen, and Silberman. (2) The only independent record of Lavi's meeting with anyone in 1980 are memoranda from the John Anderson campaign showing that he approached Anderson campaign officials on October 2 offering to secure the release of the hostages if the United States would unfreeze Iranian assets and provide F-14 spare parts. The campaign referred him to the State Department. (3) Lavi implied that he was acting on behalf of Bani-Sadr, but the State Department, according to 1980 department documents, found that he "had no authority to speak on behalf of Bani-Sadr," that he was a "self-appointed middleman" who was trying to broker a deal by going back to each party showing he had lined them up, and that "Lavi was a thoroughly disreputable character." (4) American and European defense and intelligence officials say it is ludicrous to believe that Iranians were escorted to NATO bases to play a military version of "supermarket sweep." (5) Since 1988, when Lavi was "discovered" by Honegger, he has made a series of unsubstantiated allegations, including that Customs Service agents assassinated an informant (Cyrus Hashemi) by pumping poison gas into his hospital room.

Even more than Lavi, "Frontline" and Sick relied heavily on the statements of Ari Ben-Menashe, an October Surprise source who only surfaced in 1990. "Frontline" described Ben-Menashe as a "former Israeli intelligence officer" and aired his claim to be "one of half a dozen Israelis sent to Paris at Casey's request to help coordinate arms deliveries" to Iran. "Frontline" reported that Ben-Menashe "saw a man [he] believed to be Bush" in Paris. Sick used Ben-Menashe as one of his major sources in proving that the October Surprise happened, that Casey was a key participant, and that Israel shipped weapons as part of the "deal."

Apparently emboldened by the acceptance of his allegations on "Frontline" and by Sick, last spring Ben-Menashe told several Australian newspapers and *In These Times* that he saw Bush arrive at a meeting on October 17 or 18, 1980, at a "top-floor conference room" in Paris, shake hands with Mehdi Karrubi, a leading Iranian cleric, and "close the door." But none of the other "eyewitnesses" and "sources" had ever mentioned Ben-Menashe's presence in Paris or that of any other Israelis, or of Mehdi Karrubi. Moreover, all of the reported sightings of Bush took place on October 19 or 20—not on October 17 or 18. Ben-Menashe has also claimed that Israel shipped more than $82 billion in arms to Iran since 1980—more than thirty-five times Israel's defense imports and domestic weapons production!

In an interview with *In These Times* last April, Ben-Menashe claimed that it was he—not Lavi—who met to discuss the hostages in early October at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel with Allen, McFarlane, and Silberman.

Without providing any evidence—despite repeated promises to reporters and to congressional officials to hand over "documents"—Ben-Menashe has belatedly become a key insider on other topical issues. He has claimed to have detailed inside knowledge of the Inslaw case. He said that he met many times with Robert Gates in Chile and the United States, and even that he transferred a suitcase containing $16 million to Gates at one point. (The CIA and the National Security Council provided documents to the Senate Intelligence Committee showing that Gates was meeting elsewhere at the time of every meeting cited by Ben-Menashe.) Ben-Menashe has said that McFarlane was a paid Israeli agent since 1978, had received "millions of dollars" from Israel, and was the secret "Mr. X" in the Jonathan Pollard spy case. He even says that the United States, through Israel, shipped "billions of dollars of arms" to Iraq. He has become an "expert" on Israel's nuclear program—despite the fact that he never had any connection to it. He has claimed that in 1981 he planted the homing device at the Osirak reactor before it was bombed by Israeli planes, but records show he wasn't out of the country then. He has told Israelis and journalists that he was even offered to be head of the Mossad, Israel's secret intelligence service, but that he declined.

Sympathetic reporters uncritically portray Ben-Menashe as a "senior Israeli intelligence officer" and a "national security adviser" and "special emissary" to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. In a recent interview, Sick said: "I am satisfied that Ben-Menashe knows a great deal. He has told me three or four things that I was able to corroborate. He told me he was an officer in a sigint [signal intelligence] unit. I have made no attempt to corroborate any of his other information [beyond allegations of 1980]." Seymour Hersh's new book, *The Samson Option*, which describes Israel's nuclear program and intelligence activities, uses Ben-Menashe as the primary source. Hersh said in an interview that Ben-Menashe was in sigint, that he was a "key player," and that "the Israelis want to hurt him bad" for his leaks of high-level classified information. But Hersh didn't interview Ben-Menashe until April, and he told *The New York Times* that he did not go to Israel to investigate Ben-Menashe's allegations or credibility. Hersh claims, incorrectly, that he would have been subject to Israeli censorship. What's more, according to U.S. and Israeli government documents and officials, Ben-Menashe was never in sigint, and the Israelis have never even attempted to initiate legal proceedings against Ben-Menashe, an act they would have obviously pursued if he were the source of important leaks. The closest access Ben-Menashe ever had to intelligence was his work as a low-level translator for the Israel Defense Forces External Relations Department from 1977 through 1987. Contrary to Hersh's assertion that the department is one of the most sensitive branches of military intelligence, it is in fact, compared with other branches, one of the most insignificant.

Ben-Menashe's responsibilities included translating

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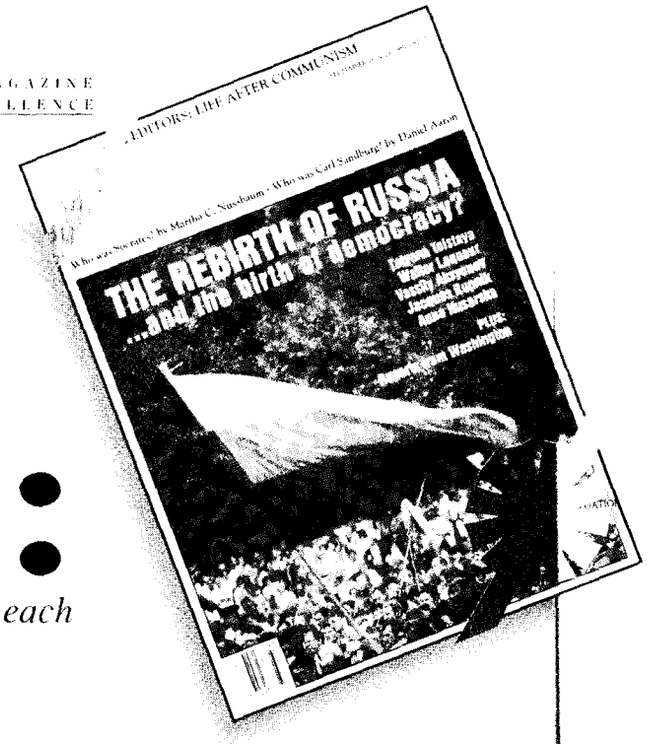

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letters and reports between the Israeli military and foreign military attachés. They did not include any translations of cables, though Israeli officials acknowledge that he did have access to minimally classified information, including a report in 1986 prepared for the United States discussing Israel's request to replenish weapons that it supplied to Iran as part of the Iran-contra operation. This alerted him to Israeli involvement in the affair, and to Iran's desperate search for weapons.

Like others before him, Ben-Menashe's recall of the October Surprise came about belatedly—after he was arrested in 1989, imprisoned for a year, tried, and ultimately acquitted in 1990 on charges of illegally trying to export planes to Iran. According to his own letter of resignation, he left in 1987 because he had not received a promotion in many years. (Ben-Menashe has told reporters that he was fired for leaking a covert operation.) His personnel file notes that he was denied a special security clearance at one point because he was considered "delusional." It also says that he had begun trying to peddle weapons in scams in Chile (where he impersonated an Israeli embassy official), Singapore, and Sri Lanka (where he impersonated a Hebrew University professor). Since 1987 he has periodically charged foreigners with being Mossad agents, without any evidence. The most recent and notorious of these claims, which appears in Hersh's new book, is against media giant Robert Maxwell, who has sued.

In 1989 Ben-Menashe was arrested in California along with two Americans. A U.S. Customs agent, posing as a buyer for Iran, tape-recorded some of the conversations in which the men offered to ship the military transport planes to Iran, using a false end-user certificate, for $12 million apiece. Ben-Menashe was going to obtain the transport planes from Israel. The trial of Ben-Menashe and one of the Americans was held in 1990 in New York (the other was tried in California); Ben-Menashe was eventually acquitted. Most of the evidence that the prosecution introduced was directed against his co-defendant, and the evidence submitted against Ben-Menashe was insufficient to convict him.

Yet the court records and information provided by prosecutors show how wildly inconsistent Ben-Menashe's story has been. In 1988 he told a *Time* reporter that he was involved in a "secret operation" to free American hostages in Lebanon by arranging the sale of planes to Iran through Israel. But a short while later Ben-Menashe told a U.S. Customs undercover agent that since 1987 he had been "self-employed as a journalist and a translator and a political writer doing a lot of traveling ... [and] that he had no ties with the Ministry of Defense." The undercover agent also testified that Ben-Menashe revealed to him that he was trying to obtain planes from Israel to be sold to an arms buyer. At pretrial, however, Ben-Menashe told attorneys that he became involved in plane sales to Iran because he wanted to expose Israel's covert operations. Ben-Menashe said he was acting as an "undercover journalist gathering information for a book" to "expose the ugly role of Israel and the United States in weapons sales."

During and after the trial, Ben-Menashe contended that he was one of the leading intelligence agents in Israel: Ben-Menashe's lawyer told the court that only three people in Israel were "privy to what was going on with Iran-contra"—Shamir, Israeli counterterrorism official Amiram Nir, and Ben-Menashe. Ben-Menashe claimed that Shamir dispatched him personally to carry out an operation to investigate who was trying to sell planes to Iran. According to sworn affidavits, Israeli officials in the office of the prime minister, including Shamir himself, never heard of Ben-Menashe.

Despite his brazen claims of being a "senior intelligence officer," Ben-Menashe went to extraordinary lengths to prevent the prosecution from obtaining his personnel records. He refused to sign a waiver authorizing the Israeli government to release his records to the U.S. court, telling his lawyers and the prosecutor that to do so would constitute a violation of the "Official Secrets Act in Israel," punishable "by death." In fact, there is no such thing as an "Official Secrets Act" in Israel, and there is no death penalty for releasing classified information—nor for that matter has Israel ever invoked its death penalty, with the notable exception of the execution of Adolf Eichmann. The judge compelled Ben-Menashe to sign the waiver. The records were then produced, which showed he was just a translator.

As a final defense, Ben-Menashe supporters claim that he must be credible because he knew of the Israel arms sales to Iran before they became public. But Israeli officials note that this knowledge can be explained both by his work translating letters to the United States in 1986 and by the fact that rumors of Israeli arms sales to Iran had circulated routinely throughout the Israeli Ministry of Defense. Ben-Menashe supporters also cite the numerous trips abroad he made from 1980 through 1987, evidence, they claim, that he was a secret agent. Yet his trips were on non-paid leave, and were recorded in his civilian passport. He never possessed a diplomatic passport as he claimed.

The last "new" primary source used by "Frontline" and Sick was Jamshid Hashemi, an Iranian middleman. His account added a new dimension to the October Surprise: he claimed that, in addition to the meetings in Paris in October 1980, there were earlier meetings in July and August of 1980, which Casey attended and at which the "deal" was actually made to delay release of the hostages.

In interviews on "Frontline" and with Sick, Jamshid said that in July 1980 he and his brother Cyrus (who died in 1986) met secretly in Madrid with Casey, a "senior CIA officer," and Iranian cleric Mehdi Karrubi. Jamshid said that Casey urged that "the Iranians hold the hostages until after the election," and that he, Cyrus, and Karrubi attended a second meeting with Casey in August in Madrid, where "Karrubi expressed acceptance ... the hostages would be released after Carter's defeat." In his op-ed piece, Sick accepted uncritically

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Jamshid's claims that he and his brother helped put the final touches on an agreement between Casey and Iran that weapons would be supplied if Iran delayed the release of the hostages.

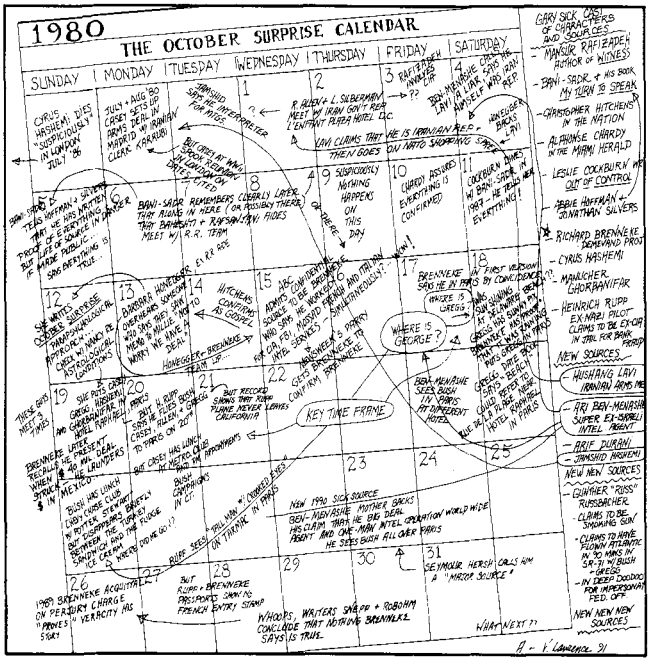
Missing from Sick's and "Frontline" 's recounting are revelations of Cyrus's and Jamshid's backgrounds that show their credibility problems to be even worse than those of Brenneke and Ben-Menashe.

Cyrus Hashemi was a typical Iranian middleman, trying to marry up business deals between Iran and other countries by inflating his importance to each side. According to declassified CIA documents and American intelligence officials, in early 1980 he offered his services to the Carter administration in getting the hostages released in return for spare parts for Iran. His lawyer, former Attorney General Elliot Richardson, put him in touch with the State Department. During the abortive attempt to free the hostages in April 1980, Cyrus offered to organize assistance from supporters in Tehran. The State Department even supplied him with funds, through the CIA, to assist him. But Cyrus failed to demonstrate that he had any connections in Tehran, and the CIA concluded that "his offers were part of a scam." All contact was dropped with Cyrus.

Cyrus was only one of several self-anointed Iranian intermediaries who purported to speak for Iran in dangling the freedom of the hostages in exchange for military weapons. Sick himself observed as much several years ago, in a chapter for the 1985 Council of Foreign Relations anthology *American Hostages in Iran: The Conduct of a Crisis*: "Throughout the late summer and fall of 1980, the Carter administration had been approached by private individuals claiming to speak for Iranian authorities ... the evidence strongly suggested that these were private entrepreneurs who saw the possibility of some lucrative business for themselves."

In mid-1984 Cyrus, Jamshid, and a third brother, Reza, were indicted for their illegal efforts from October 1, 1980, through November 1981 to ship tens of millions of dollars of military equipment to Iran. After learning about the Hashemis' secret contacts with Iranian arms procurement officials in September 1980, FBI agents wiretapped Cyrus's office and temporary apartment in Manhattan. According to a transcript of one conversation on October 21, 1980, Cyrus and several Americans discussed plans to fulfill a request from Iranian officials for Cyrus (who had told them that he could obtain badly needed weapons) to arrange the exporting of arms. In the conversations Cyrus admitted that the project was illegal and suggested various ways of avoiding detection. That was the day after Brenneke had said Cyrus was in Paris meeting with Casey. In a subsequent interview with ABC's "Nightline," Jamshid made another startling claim: that starting in August 1980, after the "deal" was concluded with Casey, tens of millions of dollars of American-made weapons were shipped by boat to Iran from Israel. No evidence exists to support the claim, but if it is true, why would the Hashemis have worked so feverishly to obtain weapons in October through what they knew were illegal means?

Reza pleaded guilty, but Cyrus and Jamshid fled to Europe to avoid arrest. Cyrus retained several lawyers, including Richardson, who asked Casey, unsuccessfully, for special dispensation for his client in light of his earlier "assistance" to the United States in 1980, referring to his secret work with the State Department. When that failed, Cyrus attempted, again unsuccessfully, to negotiate for charges against him to be dropped in return for his cooperation in interceding with Iranian officials to secure the release of the hostages in Lebanon. Throughout this period neither Cyrus nor Reza nor Jamshid ever revealed to their attorneys or to U.S. government officials their alleged secret meetings with Casey in 1980. Is it conceivable that these men, who were desperate to get the charges against them dropped and were threatening, according to memorandums of conversations between Justice and CIA officials at the time, to reveal anything they knew, would not have threatened to disclose the most damaging information they possessed—a secret deal between Casey and Iran in 1980?



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

According to court records, in 1985 Cyrus, still a fugitive from justice, became involved with a group of international arms dealers, including Americans and Israelis, trying to sell arms to Iran. Cyrus then asked his attorneys to relay to the Justice Department his offer to serve as an informant in the arms transaction in return for dropping the charges. The U.S. government agreed only to be "lenient" with Cyrus. He accepted. Soon thereafter the Customs agents, as part of a giant sting operation, began working with Cyrus overseas and in the United States to record secretly his conversations with the arms dealers.

Cyrus died on July 21, 1986, in London. A coroner's

continued on page 28

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report attributed his death to a virulent strain of leukemia, which had been diagnosed only days before. A U.S. Customs Service agent attended the autopsy and concurred in its conclusions. Nevertheless, Hashemi's supporters, including attorney William Kunstler (who represents one of the arms dealers) and "Frontline"'s Parry have stated that his death was "mysterious," that Cyrus was murdered to shut him up about what he knew about the October Surprise, and that the U.S. government has covered up his murder. Kunstler, who says that "there are suspicious needle pricks on both elbows" about the case, points out that *The Village Voice* is seriously considering paying for an exhumation. If anyone had an incentive to kill Cyrus, however, it was the arms dealers. After all, it was Cyrus's death that forced the government to drop its case against these men.

On July 20, after Sick and "Frontline" had aired Jamshid's charges, ABC's "Nightline" picked up on them. In an off-camera interview Jamshid described the meetings in Madrid at which the deal was allegedly arranged. At the first of them, which he said covered two consecutive days in "late July," Casey and two unidentified Americans first proposed the deal to Mehdi Karrubi, a "close associate" of Khomeini. The Hashemis allegedly served as interpreters. According to Jamshid, the parties met in Madrid again two weeks later, when Karrubi conveyed Khomeini's approval of Casey's offer. "Nightline" and *The Financial Times* of London investigated Jamshid's charges and claimed to have found evidence that corroborated the story.

Among the "evidence" was the fact that hotel records indicate a Jamshid Halaj and an A. Hashemi checked into the Madrid Plaza in late July, and an Ali Balnean in August. These names allegedly confirmed Jamshid's recollection that he and his brother often used aliases. Jamshid even furnished "Nightline" with a business card using the name Ali Balnean. ("Nightline" also said that the name Robert Gray was in the hotel records. Robert Gray is a Washington public relations executive who served as Casey's top deputy in the 1980 campaign. He supplied "Nightline" with his passport, which indicated that he had not left the country in July or August 1980.) Even if one were to believe that the records were not altered, with the Hashemis running around the globe attempting to broker arms deals it would hardly be surprising that they had been in Madrid during the time Jamshid is talking about. Casey, however, was not.

"Nightline" said that Hashemi's accounts of the meetings were supported by the fact that William Casey was unaccounted for in the public record between August 8 and August 13, as well as July 27 to July 29. It is true that Casey was absent from the public record for a week in August, but it is surely more likely that he was busy with the Reagan campaign than flying off to Madrid. "Nightline" offered more "evidence" in support of the July absence: an unrelated article from *The New York Times* on July 30, 1980, about the complaints of a right-to-life group over Bush's selection as vice president, quoting a Reagan spokesman as saying Casey would deal with the group, "when he returns [today] from his trip abroad." (In a side note, "Nightline" did report that Jamshid Hashemi said Bush did not attend the alleged October Paris meetings as claimed by a number of others.)

However, "Nightline" had failed to find out that Casey was not in Madrid, but in London, at the Anglo-American Conference on the Second World War. So at the end of an unrelated show a week later, having been contacted by some of those who had attended the conference with Casey, "Nightline" provided a brief update on their previous report. They said that it had been confirmed that Casey had presented a paper on special operations in France during World War II on the morning of July 29, and showed a picture of Casey with some others taken at a reception on the evening of July 28. Ted Koppel said this would leave July 27 and early on July 28 for Casey to have met in Madrid (it is a ninety-minute flight from Madrid to London).

But "Nightline" was wrong again. Jonathan Chadwick, the secretary of the British planning committee for the conference, showed us documents from the conference, which chart the attendance of each participant at each session as well as their accommodations. Casey is not only accounted for on the evening of July 28 and the morning of July 29, but also for the night of July 27 and all day, except for a brief absence, on July 28. This makes Jamshid's story of two consecutive days of meetings impossible.

Not surprising, after the "Frontline" and Sick airing of the October Surprise, new "sources" emerged to tell of their dealings with Bush and Casey. Gunther "Russ" Russbacher claimed that he was the "smoking gun" in the October Surprise conspiracy. He told Marc Cooper of *The Village Voice*, in a story published this past August, that as instructed by his "big boss" at the CIA, he—along with "co-pilot" Richard Brenneke—flew Bush and Gregg back and forth to Paris in October 1980. What's more, Russbacher claimed that he flew back to the United States in a SR-71 supersonic high altitude spy plane in a flight that lasted ninety minutes. "Sitting next to me was George Bush," throughout the flight.

Russbacher gave his interview to *The Village Voice* from prison, where he is serving a twenty-one-month sentence for impersonating a federal officer. Yes, he too claims that he was framed by the CIA to shut him up. But he would not be silenced. And as noted by the *Voice*, Russbacher "has already become a sought-after guest on the radio talk show circuit (from a phone inside the prison) and his story has elicited queries from ABC 'Nightline,' NBC, CBS, *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, *USA Today*, *San Diego Union*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Dallas Morning News*, and other publications."

The *Voice* revealed that Russbacher had a lengthy relationship with federal authorities, going back to 1965 when he was arrested for impersonating a U.S. marshal, to his army desertion in 1967, his false claim that he was an Army major, and his escape from prison in 1975. In

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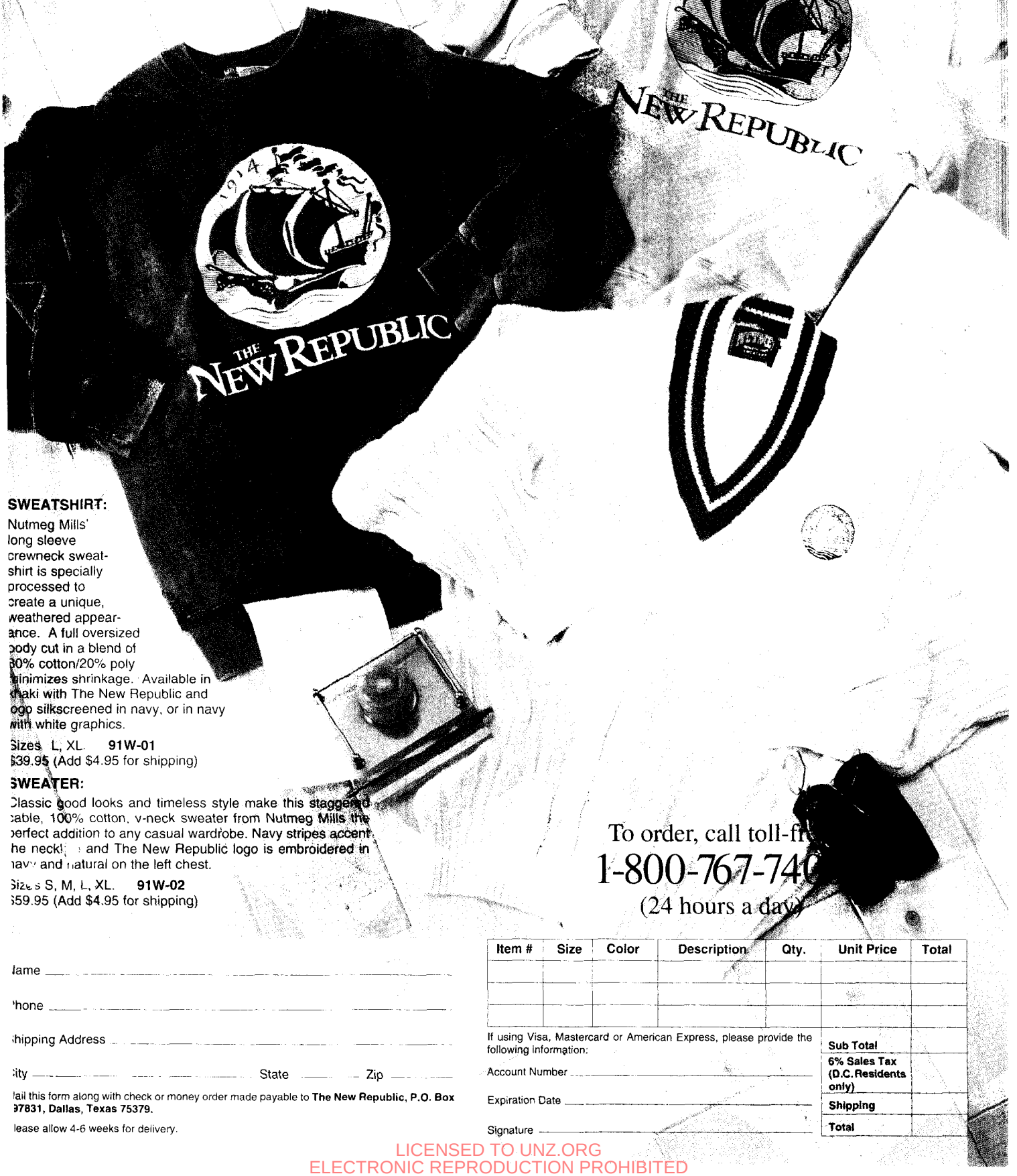

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1987 he pleaded guilty to securities fraud.

For believers in the October Surprise, no doubt there are other "sources" out there, waiting to provide their own testimony. Yet the story has finally begun to unravel—and at least one star witness seems to have caught himself in his own web of lies. The *Voice*, which had been a proponent of the conspiracy, published a piece in September declaring that Brenneke "was nowhere near the alleged conspirators' meetings in Madrid and Paris in 1980, where he claims he helped Republican big-wigs negotiate a secret hostage deal behind Jimmy Carter's back." The author, Frank Snepp, had obtained Brenneke's diaries and credit card receipts, which showed that between 1980 and 1982 Brenneke "was never away from his favorite Portland restaurants and shopping malls for more than a few days at a time"—despite his sworn testimony that he personally flew planeloads of arms to Iran for "four to five weeks at a time" and his claim to have met with Bush, Gregg, and Iranian intermediaries during the same period.

Brenneke had originally given his financial documents to a writer named Peggy Adler Robohm after she signed a contract with Brenneke and his agent last year to write his story. Initially an ardent believer in Brenneke, after scrutinizing his personal records Robohm found credit card bills and personal calendar notations that showed indisputably that he had lied, and she volunteered her information to Snepp. Snepp, who had reported Brenneke's allegations as truthful for ABC News for several years, now admits that his "apparent October Surprise fabrications undercut the credibility of everything he touched." He also concedes that Brenneke's own letters "trace the evolution of his public allegations, showing how tips from journalists and other sources prompted him to change this or that date, or modify a particular story line."

Still, conspiratorialists are not easily dissuaded. Although Snepp no longer believes that Bush or Gregg went to Paris in October 1980, he believes that Casey met with Iranian officials in Madrid in July 1980 to negotiate a secret deal with the Iranians. As for Brenneke, Snepp questions whether he was deliberately planted to "sidetrack and sabotage the investigation." Nevertheless, it is important to note that despite the irrefutable evidence that Brenneke never participated in any meetings, none of the other key sources has ever disassociated himself from Brenneke.

Meanwhile, with Brenneke largely discredited, Ben-Menashe has emerged as the main source. The October issue of *Esquire* features an article by Craig Unger that rehashes many of the earlier allegations and Ben-Menashe's most fantastic stories about the conspiracy. Not to be outdone, *Newsweek* has hired Unger to be a special consultant to help promote its own October Surprise investigation, although it recently published a piece raising serious questions about Ben-Menashe's credibility.

Bani-Sadr himself seems to be tripping over misstatements he has made over the past several years. In an interview with THE NEW REPUBLIC in September 1991 at his home in Versailles, he recanted key allegations. Asked whether he still affirmed his charge in *Playboy* that Bush led the American side in secret Paris meetings with the Iranians and at least three arms dealers whom he also named, Bani-Sadr said, "No, that information had been given to me. So I gave the information so that it could be checked to see if they were there. For me, their presence does not matter. I have never guaranteed that those people were really those who had negotiated."

Pressed on his allegation in his book and in *Playboy* about Bush's presence in Paris, which he had said came from "intelligence," Bani-Sadr now backed away: "I have always repeated that I wasn't sure." He went on to say: "As a matter of fact, I am a sociologist. I do not deal with names; I deal with relations. And morally also I cannot really say if these people or other people were there because I am not sure.... I received names from Iran and I transmitted them; some proved to be true through research and others did not." Still, Bani-Sadr had a novel explanation for why he had raised the Bush charge: "It is said that Bush himself and his entourage initiated this information so they could later refute it and brand it all lies."

In the end, October Surprise believers point to their final fall-back argument: Casey was capable of doing anything. Indeed, Casey was capable of doing a lot of nasty things—as demonstrated by the Iran-contra disclosures. But no evidence has ever emerged that shows Casey at a secret meeting in Madrid or involved in any scheme to delay the release of the hostages.

On October 20, the very day that Brenneke and Ben-Menashe claim that Casey was in Paris, campaign records show that Casey had an 8 a.m. appointment at the Metropolitan Club in Washington and that he had two other appointments that day. Moreover, Richard Allen's personal telephone log shows that Casey made a telephone call to him on October 20 at 7:30 a.m., which Allen recalls as being local.

Proponents of the October Surprise theory, including Sick, cite as circumstantial evidence of a Reagan-Khomeini deal the facts that promising negotiations with the Carter administration in the fall of 1980 were broken off and that the Iranians dropped arms from their list of demands. Even here, however, the events do not support the conclusion. According to all accounts of the crisis, far from breaking off, the negotiations continued intensely through January. In September 1980 Khomeini sent his associate Sadegh Tabatabai to meet with the American negotiator, Warren Christopher, in Germany. "The first meetings were very promising," Christopher told *The Los Angeles Times* in October 1988. Tabatabai presented a set of moderate demands, including a U.S. non-intervention commitment, the unfreezing of Iranian assets in the United States, and the return of the Shah's wealth to Iran. In addition, Tabatabai asked for the delivery of some $350 million in arms and other military equipment that the Shah had purchased. Although Sick and other conspiratorialists remain sur-

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prised at the dropping of this demand, Christopher, who should know, notes: "I discouraged it, and it never came back...." As he explained to *The Los Angeles Times*, "The issue of arms stayed on the table only briefly. I think they were just testing us."

In September 1980 Iraq invaded Iran. The Iraqi invasion preoccupied the Iranians, interrupting the negotiations. It was not until November 2, after they had stabilized the front, that the Iranians were able to return to the negotiating table. It was too late to reach a deal before the November 4 election. Both Christopher and Lloyd Cutler, counsel to President Carter, accept this explanation. As Christopher said: "It is an interesting question why the promising meetings we had in September ended so abruptly.... But I've always felt that the outbreak of the war seemed a sufficient explanation." In an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Cutler wrote that it was not until later in the fall that Hashemi Rafsanjani consolidated power, and any earlier deal would have made him vulnerable to attack from the more radical, anti-U.S. mullahs, including Bani-Sadr, who opposed the January deal with Carter as being too favorable to the United States. It was for this reason also that the Iranians rejected an October 11 offer from President Carter to provide, in exchange for the release of hostages, $150 million in arms that had been purchased by the Shah but held in the United States after the revolution. The release was in fact delayed, but it was done so unilaterally by the Iranians for their own motives—not least their enmity for Carter.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

One of Sick's and "Frontline"'s major claims is that Israel served as a conduit for weapons immediately after release of the hostages. Yet none of their sources even remotely agrees on what arms were allegedly traded as a result of a deal, or how they were traded. Ben-Menashe's assertion that Israel sold $82 billion in arms to Iran over six years, mostly transported by plane, is contradicted by Jamshid Hashemi's statement that his brother arranged the shipment of $150 million in arms by boat in four round trips from Israel to Iran between August 1980 and January 1981. Houshang Lavi declared that he witnessed Iranian officials select arms on NATO bases in 1981, and Richard Brenneke claimed that he laundered $40 million to Iran for arms purchases. And Bani-Sadr can't even get his own story straight. In *In These Times* he said that Iran received between $50 million and $100 million in arms during his administration. In his book and in our interview, however, Bani-Sadr denied that any large arms shipments were received when he was president, and that those promised as a result of the 1980 "deal" are continuing today.

Israel did in fact deliver arms, most probably with Reagan administration approval, in February 1981. However, State Department documents and interviews with Israeli and U.S. intelligence officials show that the amount was no more than $70 million. Moreover, the shipments were anything but an aberration. They were the resumption of what had been Israeli policy toward Iran prior to the crisis and the arms embargo, a policy that had often diverged from American interests. Israel had even continued some shipments during the embargo, but when Prime Minister Begin retroactively asked President Carter for his approval, Carter angrily refused, and no more equipment was traded. Shipments were resumed only after Carter himself, as part of a final agreement before he left office, lifted most sanctions on Iran on January 19, 1981.

Meanwhile, Sick has plunged even further into the depths of conspiracy. Several journalists say that earlier this year he told them that Gates was part of the October Surprise in 1980, and that the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, David Boren, would not investigate because he was being "blackmailed" by the White House, which threatened to leak derogatory allegations about his personal life. According to Sick: "I never said I had personal knowledge of that. It was being told to me by other journalists." As for the bigger story, Sick says: "The whole October Surprise was a professionally managed covert action, and I'm frankly surprised that I have as much evidence as I do."

Sick's stubborn perpetuation of the story is all the more surprising given the scorn with which he greeted the Republicans' allegations in 1980 that Carter was planning an "October Surprise" to win the election. Six years ago, writing in the Council of Foreign Relations anthology, he declared: "In the last few months before the presidential elections, there were spurious reports that the Carter administration was planning a spectacular military operation against Iran. This so-called 'October Surprise' allegedly would be intended to win votes for the president. The story was a total fabrication. It was promptly denied by the White House, and a number of responsible newspapers refused to print it. Nevertheless, the story received widespread attention and soon developed a life of its own." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Furies

Four collaborators give **Year of the Gun** (Triumph) its sweep—John Frankenheimer, the director, Blasco Giuarto, the cinematographer, Lee Percy, the editor, and the city of Rome. The film is a political thriller (the best kind of thriller, I'd say). The year is 1978, when Aldo Moro, the Italian statesman, was kidnapped, when the turmoil caused by the Red Brigades was at its height. *Year of the Gun* re-creates much of that turmoil: some of the scenes were shot in the precise places where certain events occurred. In between the segments of the plot, which fluctuates in suspense, the title of the film is made good.

Let's assume that Frankenheimer knew that the screenplay, by David Ambrose from a book by Michael Mewshaw, was only a modest armature with a few weak joints. Let's assume, too, that he knew he had to compensate for his leading man, Andrew McCarthy, who is a bit nerdy. Given these drawbacks, Frankenheimer concentrated on making the time and the place his real leading characters. The result is a kind of parallel to some of the films by Italy's leading political director, Francesco Rosi. Though Rosi's pictures—*The Mattei Affair*, for instance—often have flabby story lines, they have textures that are like heavy-breathing physical presences. Frankenheimer's plot line, on the contrary, is overly carpentered, with a finish that is a flagrant bow to the box office, but everything around that plot feels true, engulfing, scary.

An American, McCarthy, is working on an English-language newspaper—obviously the *Rome Daily American*, though it's called something else—and is writing a novel. He has an Italian lover, Valeria Golino, an affair that entails trouble. He meets an American photo journalist, Sharon Stone, a practiced plunger into political messes, who refuses to believe that McCarthy is writing, as he claims, a mere travel book.

The plot hinges on a coincidence. I won't reveal it, but I remember an incident that makes it credible. Toward the end of World War II, I heard, the FBI raided the office of sci-fi publishers in New York because their magazine had run a short story that, with amazing accuracy, predicted the course of the then top-secret Manhattan Project.

Frankenheimer, who started as an actor himself, has generally been good with actors, and he gets the most out of his people here, except that two of the people, McCarthy and Golino, don't have much to give. Stone, however, is a real find. Incisive, sexy, witty, she gives her fairly stock character electric vitality.

And vital is exactly the term for Frankenheimer's work. His career has had more downs than ups, and since *French Connection II* (1975), it hasn't had any notable ups. But this theme and setting have apparently sparked him. From the opening sequence, in which McCarthy returns to Rome from a visit to New York to find the streets roiling with marches and fights and protests, Frankenheimer takes the pulse of a time; and he carries the tensions into the scenes between individuals, helped greatly by Percy's acute editing.

Giuarto has found a new way to photograph Rome, the Eternally Photographed City. Instead of the beauty that is often (and easily) evoked, Giuarto has opted for a darker texture, a faint suggestion of high-contrast methods to give all the loveliness a somber hue. This is not the city of my favorite film romance, *Roman Holiday*: this is the Rome in which Moro was kidnapped and, fifty-four days after the film ends, was murdered.

Somewhere I've read that, shortly after World War I, Adolf Hitler, who had failed as an artist in pre-war Vienna, tried to get a job as a scene-painter in a Munich theater. He was rejected and turned to politics. (Another twist of the knife: one of those who rejected him was the novelist Lion Feuchtwanger, then active in the Munich theater—who was Jewish.)

Now there's a documentary on Nazi Germany that, though it doesn't mention the above, is keyed to its implication: that Hitler and many top Nazis were disappointed artists, that their political activity was not only a means to sublimate their artistic frustrations but also a means to put their

FILMS WORTH SEEING

La Belle Noiseuse. *Jacques Rivette's adaptation of Balzac's "Unknown Masterpiece" runs four hours and needs it. Michel Piccoli as a famous but wearied painter, Emanuelle Béart as his nude model cautiously inspiring him, are fine. (Reviewed 11/4/91)* **City of Hope.** *John Sayles's anatomy of urban corruption, written somewhat facilely, directed and acted to the hilt. (10/14/91)* **The Cry of the Owl.** *Claude Chabrol directed, from a Patricia Highsmith novel. A man gets involved in a series of deaths for which he is innocently responsible. Superbly made. (11/11/91)* **The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe.** *Lily Tomlin performs Jane Wagner's script taken from their one-woman stage show. Though character definitions eventually blur, there's a lot of sharp comedy. (10/7/91)* **—SK**

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aesthetics into grandiose practice.

Peter Cohen, a Swedish filmmaker who is the son of German-Jewish refugees, has made **The Architecture of Doom** (First Run) to explore that thesis. (The Film Forum in New York is giving this 1989 film its American premiere.) He shows us some of Hitler's youthful watercolors—passable juvenilia, in fact—then shows us how Hitler and Goebbels and Rosenberg and von Schirach, all of them frustrated artists of one kind or another, forged an aesthetic rationale for their political program. They were out to re-establish what they considered classic ideals, in art and in physical being, and to destroy "degenerate" modern art. (A traveling exhibit of art proscribed by the Nazis has just opened at the Smithsonian.) This degeneracy was created by Jews, they said. Their belief recalls an irony, if irony is needed, not mentioned in the film: one of the very first fulminations against modern art, published in the 1890s, was *Degeneration*, a book by Max Nordau, who was a German Jew and a founding Zionist. (Bernard Shaw blasted Nordau in *The Sanity of Art*.)

As Cohen shows, the extension of the Nazis' aesthetic credo was one of the causes of the Final Solution. The 6 million—along with the Gypsies and the Poles and all the rest, I suppose—were exterminated for political reasons but also because they did not fit the Nazi ideal of classical beauty.

The Architecture of Doom is a valuable addition to the film library on Nazi horror, but it would have been even more valuable if Cohen had kept strictly to his purpose. The film runs two hours; it could have spared a half-hour of quite familiar footage. It's original to see Hitler's early morning three-hour tour of Paris as an artistic jaunt. (He knew the plans of the Paris Opera so thoroughly that he missed a room that had been removed in renovation.) It's appropriate to see the first great Nuremberg rally as theater larger than theater. It's bizarre to see Hitler's plans for turning his boyhood home, Linz, in Austria, into an art center with museums and galleries and libraries and to see that the final architectural model was delivered to him only when he was in the bunker near the end. But much of the footage verges on the predictable and isn't differently illuminated in its context here.

Still, most of the film grips, helped—aesthetically!—by Bruno Ganz's narration, which sounds poised and sober even if you don't understand German. (Subtitles, of course.) With Ganz, Cohen makes his dreadful point: in all of history, hell hath had no fury like these artists scorned. •

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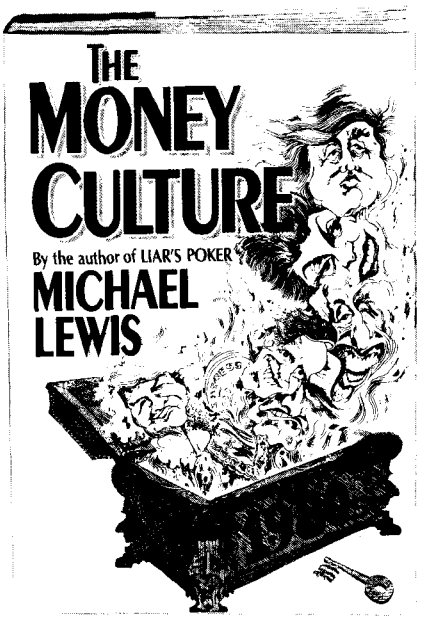

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Robert Brustein on Theater

Caricatures in Search of an Author

A large cast of leading and supporting actors was recently assembled for the top-rated, and sometimes X-rated, miniseries produced by the Judiciary Committee in the Senate Caucus Room. But the various characters involved in this three-day epic could never quite make up their minds whether they were in Shakespeare, Pirandello, or Gogol. Were the charges of sexual harassment leveled by Professor Anita Hill against Judge Clarence Thomas a non-traditional variant of the conflict in *Measure for Measure*, where an innocent woman labors to receive justice from the reputedly spotless hypocrite who, misusing his authority, attempted to seduce her? Were we witnessing another version of *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*, in which, after private lives have been painfully invaded by benighted commissioners, the heroine proves to have no fixed identity other than what people believe her to be? Or were we being treated to a rollicking revival of *The Inspector General*, Gogol's farce about self-serving impostors and corrupt officials, each accusing the others of his or her own failings?

Any of those playwrights could have provided infinitely deeper insight into the nature of character than was offered by the members of the motive-hunting committee. What the hearings lacked most was a creative imagination that could have gathered the accumulating ambiguities and conflicting testimonies into a compelling and coherent action. Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming, who prides himself on his literary background, was alone in recognizing the relevance of dramatic literature to what was occurring in the hearing room. He showed off his learning, correcting a mistaken allusion to Shakespeare by Chairman Joseph Biden and reciting in full a famous passage from *Othello* ("Good name in man and woman, dear my Lord / Is the immediate jewel of their souls") in defense of Clarence Thomas's tarnished reputation—failing to note for an audience clearly stunned by his erudition that this eloquent justification of personal integrity is uttered by the dissimulating villain Iago, who is stonewalling. Judge Thomas, vigorously nodding in agreement after characterizing the hearings in his own literary fashion as "Kafkaesque," offered no protest or correction. He was too busy acting the racially oppressed, innocent victim of a "high-tech lynching for uppity blacks." Indeed, the wholehearted defense of his character by all the Republican committee members was a heartwarming endorsement less of his virtue than of his acting ability.

Thomas clearly walked away with the performance honors. Hill, her hands primly folded on her dress, gave a subdued reading of her text with virtually no highs and lows, as she coolly itemized Thomas's references to his sexual prowess, the alien matter atop his Coke can, and his favorite porno star, Long Dong Silver. (Why wasn't *he* called as a witness?) But Thomas, alternately raging and shaking like a wounded animal howling at the moon, at times seemed almost hurt enough to withdraw his name from nomination: "No job is worth what I've been through—no job. No horror in my life has been so debilitating.... I will not provide the rope for my own lynching." (Compare Iago in Simpson's favorite play, Act III, scene iii: "Take mine office ... O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world, / To be direct and honest is not safe.")

Thomas's defense was possibly influenced as well by Richard Pryor's advice about what to do when your wife finds you in bed with another woman: deny it at all costs ("Who do you believe, me or your lying eyes?"). Certainly, his judicious posture at the witness table—index finger on cheek, middle finger on lower lip, trunk erect—was in high contrast to the horny office Lothario depicted by Hill. So was the testimony of his two female employees, J.C. Alvarez and Phyllis Berry, who played to the class resentments and soap-operatic ethos of the television audience by declaring that Hill was "aloof" and "holier than thou," and that she had a secret passion for Thomas. Most fetching of all was white-haired Charles Kothe, former dean of Oral Roberts Law School, who defended Thomas by saying he delivered eloquent prayer orations, apparently unaware that, just one day earlier, the police had picked up the spellbinding preacher Jimmy Swaggart in a car with a prostitute and pornographic magazines.

All of this delicious theater may account for the astonishing reversal in audience sympathy that developed after Thomas's testimony. For, despite his admission that he had failed to watch the performance of his co-star in a crucial episode of the series, despite the corroborating testimony of highly credible witnesses supporting Hill's story, despite the evidence of her polygraph test, the polls made it clear that most spectators were more persuaded by Thomas's tearful-defiant histrionics than by the Method-like understatement of his accuser.

Or perhaps they were simply distracted by the really horrendous acting of the supporting cast. Biden, who originally inspired the drama by failing to investigate Hill's initial charges, couldn't even manage a coherent line of dialogue, so eager was he to appear fair, impartial, and, above all, equally sensitive to racism and sexism. Consider a typical passage in which he is questioning the judge:

> You emphasized here today early—and this, is, again—we're all trying to find out what it could be, what could be your motivation, if in fact what you say is true and what she says is true, how this happened.... I do not have the transcript from this morning, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but that you said you had a special obligation, as a consequence of his referral.... Did that special relationship—obligation, wrong word—obligation, did that impact on your relationship, professional or otherwise, with Anita Hill?

(Biden is an amateur actor, but some might interpret this clumsy improvisation as a subtle attempt to emulate the halting but artful meandering of David Mamet.)

Or take the performance of Senator Strom Thurmond, who rarely emerged from narcolepsy during the entire three days of testimony unless to correct Biden's blunder that he hailed from North Carolina rather than South Carolina, or to comment on the sprightliness of his aged colleagues. (His own reverence for youth was signified tonsorially, by means of his dyed black hair.) Long revered as the traditional eminence of bigotry in the Senate, this stubborn advocate of segregation was being forced to play one of the most difficult roles of his life, that of a man who revels in the idea of sending an African American to the Supreme Court. But the condition of rubicund mummification in which he sat throughout the course of the proceedings may have been a symptom of the Brabantio complex: paralysis at the sight of a black man publicly seated next to a white wife.

As for our noted Shakespearean scholar, Simpson—hunched, owlish, his glasses perched low on his nose, his long fingers ruffling documents—he often seemed to have been auditioning for Lionel Barrymore's role as the miserly

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banker in *It's A Wonderful Life.* Simpson had two rivals in his bid to be the Mr. Nasty Badman of this drama. That natty embodiment of Mormon disapproval, Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, a slab of enamelled glass stuck into a tab collar and pin-striped shirt, was usually so upright, or uptight, with rage you thought he was going to shatter. Determined to display his delicate sense of priorities, he railed against leaking staff members, special interest groups, "slick lawyers," the Soviet Union, and any other contemptible forms of life he could think of, at the same time proudly flourishing his research into previous references to the same porno star in an Oklahoma court case and (lest he be outdone by the pedagogical Simpson) literary precedents for allusions to pubic hair in *The Exorcist.* Hatch seemed to be persuaded of Thomas's innocence not so much by any internal evidence as by the fact that if he had ever used the "sick" dirty words alleged to have been spoken to Hill, the judge would have been consigned to a psychopathic ward. Obviously he has not spent much time in the Senate cloakroom.

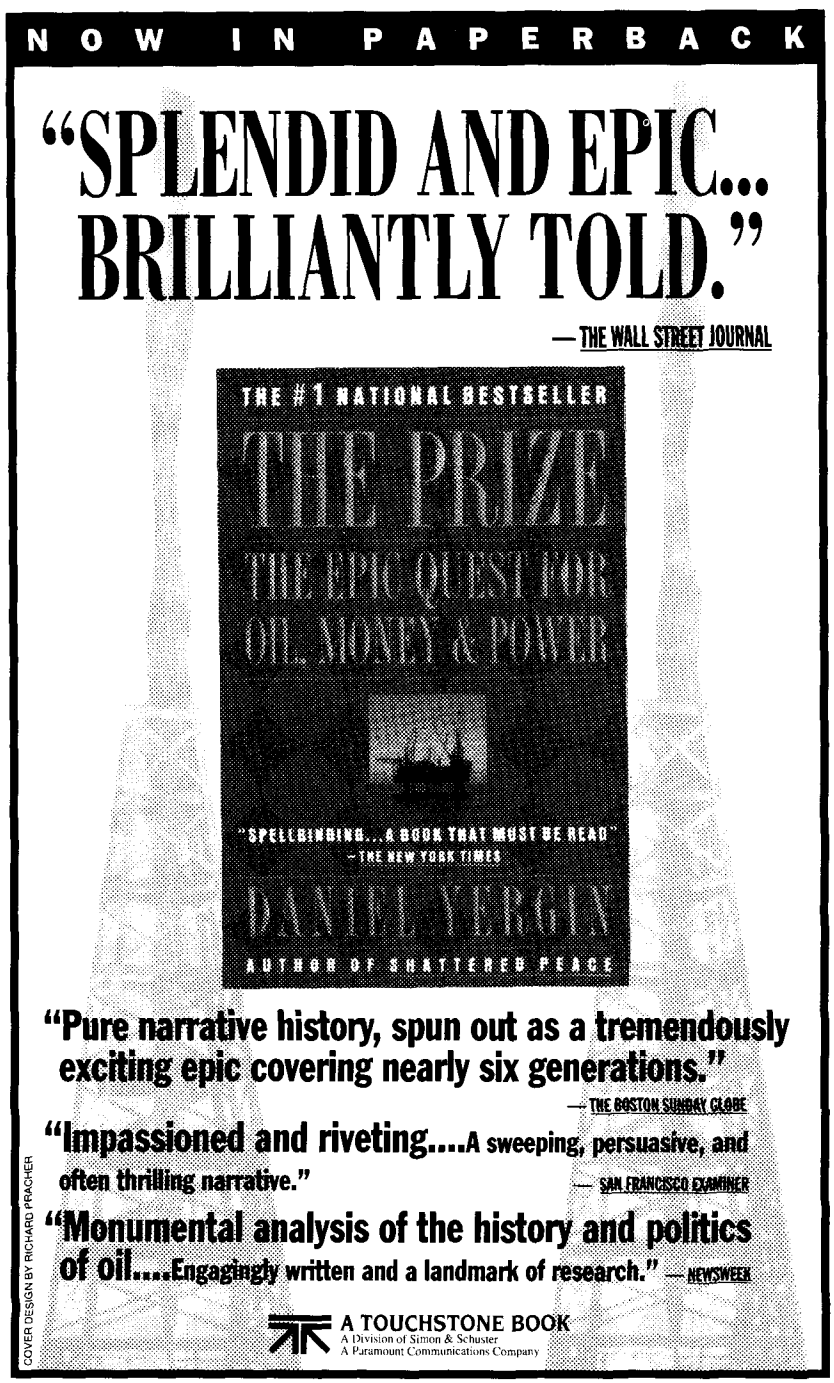
Hatch had considerable competition in character assassination from craggy Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, a plodding actor playing a remorseless small-town prosecutor, whose comparisons of minute differences in testimony, though worthy of a Talmudic scholar, led him to conclude, entirely without evidence, that Hill was guilty of "flat-out perjury." It was this charge that finally vitalized the previously lethargic Edward Kennedy to utter cries of "shame" both in the Caucus Room and later on the Senate floor. This brought those inevitable references to the bridge in Chappaquiddick and his own checkered sexual history, making it obvious why he had spent so much of the hearings silently slumped in his chair.

Kennedy's reticence prevented him from playing the unfilled role in this drama, that of advocate for a woman whose character was being persistently blackened because she had brought an unpleasant message. Among the other Democrats impotent to block the defamation and the slander that greeted Hill, Howell Heflin was too befuddled, Howard Metzenbaum too feeble, Dennis DeConcini too co-opted, and Herb Kohl (making repeated reference to Hill and Thomas as "Africans" despite panicked gestures from his staff) too dim-witted. The Duke never managed to expose Angelo and exonerate Isabella. The real Inspector General stayed home. Mr. Smith never went to Washington.

Ultimately the theme of this drama, for all the concern with Thomas's office conduct toward Hill, was not sexism or racism, and not even competence, despite his questionable qualifications for the job. It was veracity. There may be a statute of limitations on sexual harassment, but even the slightest possibility that a Supreme Court judge has lied to protect his nomination, and is therefore morally unfit for office, suggests that our country has even worse theater to come. The characters performing in this tragicomic event may have lacked an author, but Simpson is correct in saying that Shakespeare still provides the most incisive key to its meaning—not Iago's manipulation of the truth to hide his motives, but Lear's anguished perception of the way the world is run by figures of authority:

> Through tattered gowns small vices do appear;
> Riches and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
> And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
> Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.

Through the cynical choice of an administration uninterested in the future of this nation beyond 1992, and with the help of a legislative body voting 52-48 for confirmation, Clarence Thomas continues to wear his furred gown, while Anita Hill has been left in her tatters. •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Fiction, morals, and politics.

Three in a Bed

By Nadine Gordimer

Three in a bed: it's a kinky cultural affair. I had better identify the partners.

Politics and morals, as concepts, need no introduction, although their relationship is ambiguous. But fiction has defining responsibilities that I shall question, so I shall begin right away with the basic, dictionary definition of what fiction is supposed to be. Fiction, says the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the action of feigning or inventing imaginary existences, events, states of things." Fiction, collectively, is prose novels and stories; and so poetry, according to the OED, is not fiction.

The more I ponder this, the more it amazes me; the more I challenge it. Does the poet not invent imaginary existences, events, states of things? If I should ask you to give examples of the powers of the poet's invention of imaginary existences and events, of the poet's matchless evocation of "states of things," all drawn, just as the prose writer's are, from life—from the fact of life—as the genie is smoked from the bottle, you could fill an evening with quotations. If fiction is the suprareal spirit of the imagination, then poetry is the ultimate fiction. In speaking of fiction, then, I should be understood to be including poetry.

What are morals doing in bed with fiction? Morals have bedded with storytelling ever since the magic of the imaginative capacity developed in the human brain—and to account for this faculty, in my ignorance of a scientific explanation of changes in the cerebrum or whatever, I believe it was the inkling development of the notion that the truth about being alive might lie here, in the transforming imagination; that the harsh lessons of daily life, of coexistence of human with human, and with animals and nature, could be made sense of in the ordering properties of the transforming imagination working upon the "states of things."

With this faculty fully developed, great art in fiction can evolve in imaginative revelation to fit the crises also of an age after its own, undreamt of when it was written. Thus, *Moby Dick* can now be seen as an allegory of environmental tragedy. "The whale is the agent of cosmic retribution," Harry Levin has written: we have sought to destroy the splendid creature that is nature, believing we could survive only by "winning" a battle against nature; and now we see our death in the death of nature, brought about by ourselves. But the first product of the faculty of the imagination was, of course, religion. And from the gods (what a supreme feat of the imagination they were!), establishing a divine order out of the unseen, came the secular, down-to-soil-and-toil order of morals, so that humans could somehow live together, and in balance with other creatures.

Morals are the husband/wife of fiction. And politics? Politics somehow followed morals in, picking the lock and immobilizing the alarm system. At first it was in the dark, perhaps, and fiction thought that the embrace of politics was the embrace of morals, didn't know the difference. And this is understandable. Morals and politics have a family connection. The ancestry of politics is morality—way back, and generally accepted as forgotten. The resemblance certainly has faded. In the light of morning, however, if fiction accepts the third presence between the sheets, it is soon in full cognizance of who and what politics is. Let me carry my allegory just one generation further: from this kinky situation came two offspring, Conformity and Commitment. And you will know who fathered whom.

Until just two years ago I would have said that the pressures to write fiction that would conform to a specific morality, secular or religious, long had been, and still could be, safely ignored by writers. The Vatican still has its list of proscribed works, but in most countries one assumed that there was freedom of expression so far as religion was concerned. (There is an exception in certain American schools.) Blasphemy? A quaint taboo, outdated, like the dashes that used to appear between the first and last letters of four-letter words. Where censorship was rigidly practiced, in Eastern Europe, for example, and in the Soviet Union, the censors were concerned with what was considered politically subversive in literature, not with what might offend or subvert religious sensibilities. This was true even in my own country, South Africa, where the Dutch Reformed Church, with a particular form of Calvinistic prudery, had twisted religion to the service of racism and identified the church, including its sexual morality based on the supposed "purity" of one race, with the security of the state. A decade ago an actor in South Africa could not get away with exclaiming "My God!" on the stage, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* was banned; but by 1989 savage satire of the church and its morality was ignored. As for sexual permissiveness, full frontal nudity in films was not snipped by the censor's scissors.

But in holding this illusion about freedom of expression in the orbit of religious and sexual morality, I was falling into something like the ignorance that Islam finds reprehensible in the Judeo-Christian-Atheist world (more strange bedfellows . . .), the ignorance of the absolute conformity to religious taboos that is sacred to Islam. I should have known that that particular tradition of censorship was not evolving into tolerance, least of all into tolerance of the rights of non-Muslims, but was instead becoming an international gale force of growing religious fanaticism. Then came the holy war against *The Satanic Verses*, in which the enemy was a single fiction, a single writer, and the whole might and money of the Islamic world was deployed in the *fatwa* that sentenced Salman Rushdie to death.

It was then that I, like other writers, was stunned to know that situations in which religious persecution is turned on its head, and religion persecutes freedom (not only freedom of expression but a writer's freedom of movement, and finally a writer's right to life itself) are back with us. And now, in a new decade of freedoms rising, we see that while a writer becomes president in one country, another writer is hounded to death throughout the world. We see how a religion has the power to terrorize, through its followers around the world. Political refugees from repressive secular regimes can seek asylum elsewhere, but Rushdie has nowhere to go. Islam's edict of death takes terrorist jurisdiction everywhere, in contempt of the laws of any country.

Pre-Freudian hypocrisy, puritan prudery, may be forgotten. But the horror of what has happened to Rushdie is a hand fallen heavily on the shoulder of fiction: pressures to write in conformity with a specific morality still can arrive, and pur-

Nadine Gordimer has been awarded the 1991 Nobel Prize in literature. Her new book is *Jump and Other Stories* (Farrar Straus & Giroux).

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sue a writer with incredible vindictiveness, even if this is unlikely to happen to most writers.

Am I positing, then, that morals should be divorced from fiction? That fiction is free of any moral obligation? No. Fiction has a morality. Fiction's morality lies in taking the freedom to explore and to examine morals, including moral systems such as religions, with unafraid honesty. This has not been an easy relationship, whether in the ghastly extreme of Rushdie's experience or, say, in Flaubert's. Commenting on the indecency case against *Madame Bovary* after he won it in 1857, Flaubert wrote of the establishment of spurious literary values and the devaluation of real literary values that such a trial implies for fiction:

> My book is going to sell unusually well.... But I am infuriated when I think of the trial; it has deflected attention from the novel's artistic success ... to such a point that all this row disquiets me profoundly.... I long to ... publish nothing; never to be talked of again.

The relationship of fiction to politics has not had the kind of husbandly or fatherly authoritarian sanction that fiction's relationship to morals, with their religious origins, lingeringly has. No literary critic I know suggests that moralizing—as opposed to "immorality"—has no place in fiction, whereas many works of fiction are declared "spoiled" by the writer's recognition of politics as a great motivation of character, as great a motivation as sex or religion. Of course, this lack of sanction is characteristic of an affair, a wild affair in which great tensions arise, embraces and repulsions succeed one another, distress and celebration are confused, loyalty and betrayal change place, accusations fly. And whether the fiction writer gets involved with politics through his or her convictions as a citizen, pushing from within against the necessary detachment of the writer, or through the pressure of seduction from without, the same problems in the relationship must be dealt with, in the fiction as well as in the life.

For when have writers not lived in times of political conflict? Whose Golden Age, whose Belle Epoque, whose Roaring Twenties were those so-named lovely times? The time of slave and peasant misery, while sculptors sought perfect proportions of the human torso? The time of revolutionaries in Czar Alexander's prisons, while Grand Dukes built mansions in Nice? The time of the hungry and the unemployed, offered the salvation of fascism while playboys and girls danced balancing glasses of pink champagne?

When, explicitly or implicitly, could writers evade politics? Even those writers who have seen fiction as the pure exploration of language, as the equivalent of music in the exploration of sound, even the babbling of Dada and the page-shuffling attempts of Burroughs, have all been a revolt against the politically imposed spirit of their respective times—literary movements that were an act (however far-out an act) of acknowledgment of a relationship between politics and fiction.

It seems that there is no getting away from the relationship. We live, on the one hand, in what Seamus Heaney calls a world where the

> undirected play of the imagination is regarded at best as luxury or licentiousness, at worst as heresy or treason. In ideal republics ... it is a common expectation that the writer will sign over his or her venturesome and potentially disruptive activity into the keeping of official doctrine, traditional system, a party line, whatever.

When he entered the order of the Jesuits, Gerard Manley Hopkins felt obliged to abandon poetry "as not having to do with my vocation," a submission of the imagination to religious orthodoxy exactly comparable to the one that is demanded of writers,

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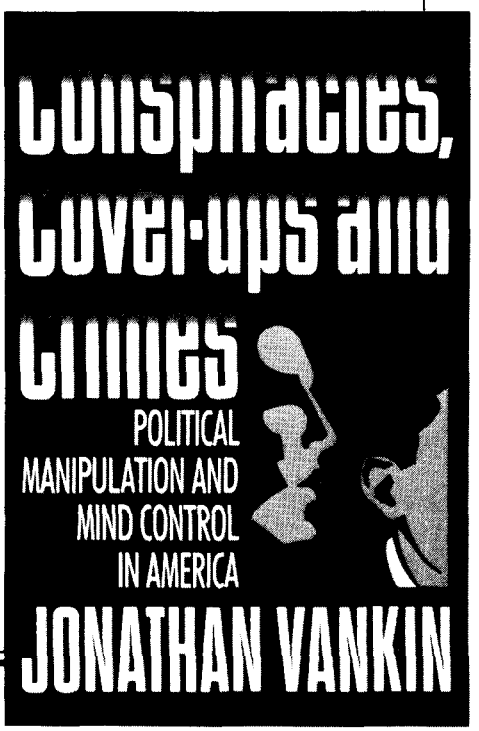

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in many instances in our epoch, by political orthodoxies. We are shocked by such clear cases of creativity outlawed.

But things are not always so drastically simple. Not every writer of fiction who enters into a relationship with politics trades imagination for the hair shirt of the party hack. There is also the case of the writer whose imaginative powers are genuinely roused by, and involved with, the spirit of politics as she or he personally experiences it. This may be virtually inescapable in times and in places of socially seismic upheaval. Society shakes, the walls of entities fall. The writer has known the evil, the indifference, or the cupidity of the old order, and the spirit of creativity naturally pushes toward new growth. The writer is moved to fashion an expression of a new order, accepted on trust as an advance in human freedom that therefore will be the release of a greater creativity.

"Russia became a garden of nightingales. Poets sprang up as never before. People barely had the strength to live but they were all singing": so wrote Andrey Bely in the early days of the Russian Revolution. And one of Pasternak's latest biographers, Peter Levi, notes that Pasternak—popularly known to the West, on the evidence of his disillusioned *Dr. Zhivago*, as *the* anti-Communist writer—contributed manifestos in his younger days to the "infighting of the day." In a poem to Stalin he sang:

> We want the glorious. We want the good.
> We want to see things free from fear.
> Unlike some fancy fop, the spendthrift
> of his bright, brief span, we yearn
> for labor shared by everyone,
> for the common discipline of law.

This yearning is addressed by writers in different ways, as fiction seeks a proper relation with politics. In the Soviet Union of Pasternak's day, some fell into what the Italian writer Claudio Magris calls, in a different context, and with devastating cynicism, "a sincere but perverted passion for freedom, which led ... into mechanical servitude, as is the way with sin." The noble passion deteriorated into the tragically shabby, as the Writers' Union in the 1930s turned on itself to beat out all but mediocrities mouthing platitudes, driving Mayakovsky to suicide and turning down Pasternak's plea to be granted somewhere other than a freezing partitioned slice of a room in which to write and to live.

Yet Pasternak had not abandoned belief—he never did—in the original noble purpose of revolution. When Trotsky asked why he had begun to abstain from social themes, Pasternak wrote to a friend, "I told him *My Sister, Life* [his then recent book] was revolutionary in the best sense of the word. That the phase of the revolution closest to the heart ... the *morning* of the revolution, and its outburst [is] when it returns man to the *nature* of man and looks at the state with the eyes of *natural* right." But for him the writing of this period had become, by the edicts of the State and the Writers' Union, "a train derailed and lying at the bottom of an embankment." In this choice of an image there is a kind of desperate subconscious assertion of the creativity so threatened in himself and in his fellow writers, since trains, perhaps symbolic of the pace at which the meaning of life passes, recur so often in Pasternak's work.

Yeats's "terrible beauty" of the historic moments when people seek a new order to "return man to the nature of man," a state of "natural right," does not always make politics the murderer of fiction. The Brechts and the Nerudas survive, keeping that vision. But the relation, like all vital ones, always implies a danger. The first dismaying discovery for the writer is again best expressed by Magris's cynicism: that "the lie is quite as real as the truth, it works upon the world, transforms it." The fiction writer, however, in pursuit of truth beyond the guise of reasoning, has always believed that truth, however elusive, is the only reality.

But we have seen the lie transforming. We have had Goebbels. And we have had his international descendants, practicing precisely such a transformation on the people of a number of countries, including the white people of my own country, who accepted the lie that apartheid was both divinely decreed and secularly just, and created a society on it.

To be aware that the lie can transform the real world places an enormous responsibility on art: it must counter this lie with its own transformations. The knowledge gained by the writer's searching and intuition instinctively contradicts the lie:

> We page through each other's faces
> we read each looking eye ...
> It has taken lives to be able to do so

writes the South African poet Mongane Wally Serote. We may refuse to write according to any orthodoxy, we may refuse to toe any party line, even that drawn by the cause we know to be just, and our own; but we cannot refuse the responsibility of what we know. What we know beyond surface reality has to become (again in Serote's words) what "we want the world to know." We must in this, our inescapable relation with politics, "page for wisdom through the stubborn night."

At its crudest and most easily identifiable, the stubborn night is politically inspired censorship, and in some countries (read the pages of the *Index on Censorship*) it is imprisonment and torture. But even in countries where no writer is locked up or beaten for his fiction, and censorship is minimal and open to challenge by the law, fiction may be threatened by the power of the lie. Harold Pinter has spoken recently of

> a disease at the very center of language, so that language becomes a permanent masquerade, a tapestry of lies. The ruthless and cynical mutilation and degradation of human beings, both in spirit and body ... these actions are justified by rhetorical gambits, sterile terminology and concepts of power which stink. Are we ever going to look at the language we use, I wonder? Is it within our capabilities to do so?... Does reality essentially remain outside language, separate, obdurate, alien, not susceptible to description? Is an accurate and vital correspondence between what is and our perception of it impossible? Or is it that we are obliged to use language only in order to obscure and distort reality—to distort what *is*—to distort what *happens*—because we fear it? I believe it's because of the way we use language that we have got ourselves into this terrible trap, where words like freedom, democracy, and Christian values are still used to justify barbaric and shameful policies and acts.

The writer has no reason to be if reality remains, for him or for her, outside language. The writer must seek an accurate and vital correspondence between what is and his or her perception of what is, finding the real meaning of words to express "the states of things," shedding the ready-made concepts smuggled into language by politics.

All very fine in theory, yes. But how would you refer in a novel to the term "Final Solution," coined by the Nazis? Or to the term "Bantustans," coined by the South African government in the 1960s to cover up the dispossession of blacks of their citizenship rights and land? Or, for that matter, to the term "constructive engagement," coined by the government of the United States in the 1980s for its policy toward apartheid? How would you refer to all these counterfeits of reality without a paragraph of explanation (which has no place in a novel) of what they actually were? The false currency of meaning jingles conveniently in our vocabularies; but it is no small change.

It becomes accepted value, and for this writers bear responsibility. Every fiction writer, therefore, must struggle to expose it, by discarding it in favor of the reality of

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the "states of things." (Journalism, which is supposed to be "fact" as opposed to "fiction," generally will not accomplish this.) Here, on the primal level of language itself, by which we became the first self-questioning animals, the ones able to assess our own behavior, is where fiction finds its footing in relation to politics.

My own country, South Africa, provides what can be cited as the paradigm of the problems of the full development of the relationship. Perhaps echoes of the present debate over what postapartheid fiction will be, ought to be, have reached you. Of course, the very term "postapartheid fiction" reveals an acceptance that there has been, that there is, such an orthodoxy as "apartheid fiction," or more accurately, "anti-apartheid fiction." In the long struggle against apartheid, it has been recognized that an oppressed people needs the confidence of cultural backing. Literature, including fiction, became what is known as "a weapon of struggle."

There is now a debate taking place among the writers. There are those who, perceiving that the cost was the constraint of the writer's imaginative powers within what was seen narrowly as relevant to the political struggle, think that the time has come for writers to release themselves, if they are to be imaginatively equal to the fullness of human life that is predicated for the future. (The revolutionary and writer Albie Sachs, with the undeniable authority of a man who lost an arm and the sight of one eye in the struggle, has gone so far as to call, if half-seriously, for a five-year ban on the slogan "culture is a weapon of struggle.") And there are others who believe that literature must still be perceived as a weapon in the hands, must still exist under the direction of the liberation movement come to power in a future democracy.

But there are some writers who have been—I adapt Heaney's phrase to my own context—"guerrillas of the imagination": in their fiction they serve the struggle for freedom by refusing any imposed orthodoxy of subject and treatment, but they also further the struggle by attempting to take unfettered creative grasp of the complex "states of things" in which, all through people's lives, directly and indirectly, in dark places and light, that struggle has taken place. As a citizen, as a South African actively opposed to racism all my life, as a supporter and now a member of the African National Congress, in my conduct and my actions, I have myself submitted voluntarily and with self-respect to the discipline of the liberation movement. For my fiction, however, I have claimed and practiced my integrity to the free transformation of reality, in whatever forms and modes of expression I need. There, my commitment has been to make sense of life as I know it and observe it and experience it. In my few ventures into non-fiction, in my few political essays, my partisanship has no doubt shown my bias, and perhaps a selectivity of facts. But then, nothing I write in such "factual" pieces will be as true as my fiction.

So if my fiction and that of other writers has legitimately served the politics in which I believe, it has been because the imaginative transformations of fiction, in the words of the Swedish writer Per Wästberg, "help people understand their own natures and know they are not powerless." "Every work of art is liberating," he asserts, speaking for all who write. That should be the understanding on which fiction enters into a relationship with politics, however passionate the involvement may be. The transformation of the imagination must never "belong" to any establishment, however just, however fought for, however longed for. Pasternak's words should be our credo:

> When seats are assigned to passion and vision
> On the day of the great assembly
> Do not reserve a poet's position:
> It is dangerous, if not empty. •

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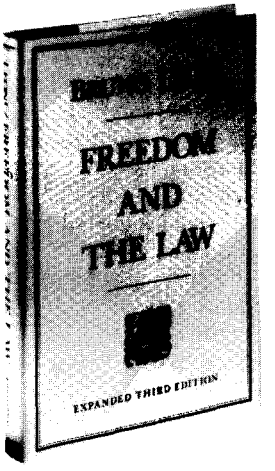

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Georgia On My Mind

By Peter Reddaway

The Future Belongs to Freedom by Eduard Shevardnadze translated by Catherine Fitzpatrick

(Free Press, 237pp., $22.95)

"This book is not a political memoir.... Memoirs are a genre that belong to departures, and I do not intend to leave the scene." So says Eduard Shevardnadze, the former foreign minister of the Soviet Union, in his absorbing autobiographical essay. Fortunately the author is only occasionally triumphalist in the style of the American title of his book. (The Russian edition is more appropriately called *My Choice.*) One of his conclusions, written in the wake of the failed Kremlin coup of last August, is aptly tentative: "Since everything is still possible, we cannot succumb to euphoria. Everything may still turn out differently. Anything can happen in the death throes of a system pitched in final battle."

Indeed, many disconcerting things, as well as many elating things, have happened in the two months since those words were penned. As a result, this able and engaging man will have to exercise great ingenuity to find a suitably challenging role to play in the future. Most important of all, he must face the awkward fact that the Soviet empire has comprehensively collapsed. Since barely the slightest provision for such a momentous event was made in advance, the chances that an effective political union, or even a viable economic association, will emerge from the wreckage appear minimal. No freshly minted federation, no equivalent of the British Commonwealth: instead we see a disintegrating central government and, in the republics, insecure leaders desperately trying to build or to preserve popular mandates. Their favored technique is to play on long-standing antipathy to the imperial center and on widespread contempt for Moscow's and Gorbachev's performance over the past two years—to play, in other words, on ethnic and regional nationalism. This is an outcome that Shevardnadze feared but did not think likely, and it is one that greatly complicates his job prospects.

Even before the coup, Gorbachev and the center seemed doomed to a precarious future, or to none at all. Now sentiment is growing in parts of the Russian leadership for declaring Russia independent, swallowing whole what remains of the central government, and telling the other republics that Russia is ready to enjoy its own relative wealth without joining any associations in which it is likely to serve as a milk cow. This trend has led to high-level resignations from the administration of Boris Yeltsin and exacerbated the recent tendency of his senior advisers to fire insults at one another. In short, the unity and the cohesion that were on display when Yeltsin led the resistance to the coup are rapidly dissipating, and it is not yet clear whether he will be able to rally his forces.

One useful outcome of these unfortunate if predictable developments is the belated emergence of some understanding among Western governments that the Soviet center is so weak that, whatever paper agreements Gorbachev and Yeltsin may conjure up, it cannot possibly be a reliable partner for any serious purpose, including the supply of emergency food and medical aid. Only the republican governments have (in widely varying degrees) any legitimacy. Realistic debate about how exactly the West and the republics can cooperate should be stimulated now by the publication of the first Western aid strategy known to me that puts these simple truths at the heart of its analysis. This is *From Soviet Disunion to Eastern Economic Community*, a seventy-eight-page booklet issued by the Institute for International Economics in Washington. It challenges the confidence of those who believe (with Graham Allison and Grigory Yavlinksy, the architects of the "Grand Bargain") that the necessary economic reforms "can be undertaken by the weak center of a disintegrating system and dissolving empire." Its authors, Oleh Havrylyshyn and John Williamson, conclude that "in this historical context, the apparently conflicting objectives of national aspirations and economic efficiency may be best reconciled not by trying to strengthen the center but by establishing an economic community of politically independent nations." Such a community could create a payments union that would permit separate currencies but facilitate the trade that is now under serious threat.

When Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and others launched perestroika in 1985-86, they certainly did not intend it to lead to "a disintegrating system and a dissolving empire." Shevardnadze makes this clear in his book, which fulfills its pledge to "tell the story of the ideas of perestroika," ideas that were designed to renew the existing system. Fortunately Shevardnadze sometimes overlooks his book's other pledge—to eschew personalities. This is especially true in his epilogue, which he wrote in a state of great excitement two days after the coup collapsed. Most important, Shevardnadze's own personality comes clearly into focus: he is a self-controlled, emotional, humane, earnest, non-corrupt, somewhat righteous and self-preoccupied, slightly sentimental, defensive, often brave workaholic, who conveys lots of charm and occasional flashes of sarcastic humor.

The life story behind that personality is not a simple one, as few are in the Soviet Union, where linking the past and the present can be a disorienting enterprise. For Shevardnadze, the pattern seems to have gone like this: a warm and stimulating childhood was followed by the partial suppression of his individuality, thanks to Stalin's terror, the war against the Nazis, Communist indoctrination, and a moderate amount of political ambition. This was in turn followed over the past twenty years by the gradual re-emergence and flowering of the original, lively individual.

Shevardnadze was born into the family of a Georgian village schoolteacher in 1928. His upbringing was clouded by the arrest in 1937 of various people he loved, including, briefly, his father, all on inexplicable charges. Understandably, this had an impact. His inoculation against the risk of developing a typical Bolshevik indifference to injustice didn't end there: he went on to marry a woman whose father had been shot as an "enemy of the people." Still, the death of a brother in the war, as well as the mixture of idealism and careerism that impelled him to give up his medical studies for Party work (against his parents' urging), inclined him to uncritical patriotism and conformism. Many years later his mother rebuked him for his choice of career with the words:

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"You took to curing social ills. It's a hopeless cause." To this, Shevardnadze replies:

> Of course, she was right. How many times, in despair from the realization that it was impossible to fix anything, improve anything, or restore even a tiny speck of health to an ailing society, I would remember my mother's reproach. But it also spurred me to prove that my choice was not in vain.

The year 1956 brought Shevardnadze considerable mental stress. First Khrushchev denounced some of Stalin's crimes, casting slurs on Georgia in the process, and the young Communist went through the agony of wondering whether he had "worshiped the wrong god." Then, two weeks later, thousands of Georgians staged demonstrations in defense of the national pride that Khrushchev had injured, only to be met with machine guns and tanks. The official figures were twenty-two dead and dozens wounded. Shevardnadze was shocked, spoke out publicly against methods that were "not only morally reprehensible" but also "politically dangerous," got his audience's support—and was made deputy head of Georgia's Young Communist League, or Komsomol.

The next year he became its head, and at conferences he started meeting Mikhail Gorbachev, his opposite number in Stavropol, a Russian city a few hours' drive away. The striking similarities in their backgrounds and personalities soon made them friends. After progressing up the ladder as a Party apparatchik, Shevardnadze was suddenly assigned to be deputy leader of Georgia's ministry of internal affairs (MVD) in 1964. From 1965 to 1972, he was its leader. His achievements over these eight years must have impressed Moscow, for the long stint preceded his elevation in 1972 to the supreme post in Georgia, Party boss of the republic.

Yet the eight years take up only two rather uninformative pages in Shevardnadze's book. It is not hard, though, to guess why he was appointed to a job that included running the police. Georgia has long had a reputation as one of the more corrupt republics, and here was a man who believed, in his own words, that "a nation eaten away by cancerous graft was doomed to degeneration and death." For Shevardnadze, "corruption took top priority, pushing everything else into the background." He tells us that he took "aggressive measures" against graft, and he admits that in the process MVD agencies violated the law. By way of explanation he says: "The penitentiary system in a totalitarian state has its horrifying features, and it is beyond the power of one man to reform it without changing the nature of the state itself."

Some of the human reality behind these general phrases can be found in extensive documentation long available in the West from other sources. In 1975 and 1976 two prisoners who had systematically tortured detainees, sometimes to death, and four prison officials who had given the orders for such torture were put on trial in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. The judge in one trial allowed the writer Zviad Gamsakhurdia (now the authoritarian president of Georgia) access to the case files. These contained what must be one of the most extraordinary documents in the annals of human cruelty: a minutely detailed, unemotional account, several hundred pages long, by one of the prisoners, in which he describes how he tortured some 200 detainees over several years in order to obtain specific information or confessions—all, of course, on the orders of top officials of the MVD, who allegedly included Shevardnadze. Nothing in the available materials suggests that his testimony was other than accurate. The prisoner, Yuri Tsirekidze, a former gymnastics champion of the USSR, was eventually sentenced to ten years at hard labor for

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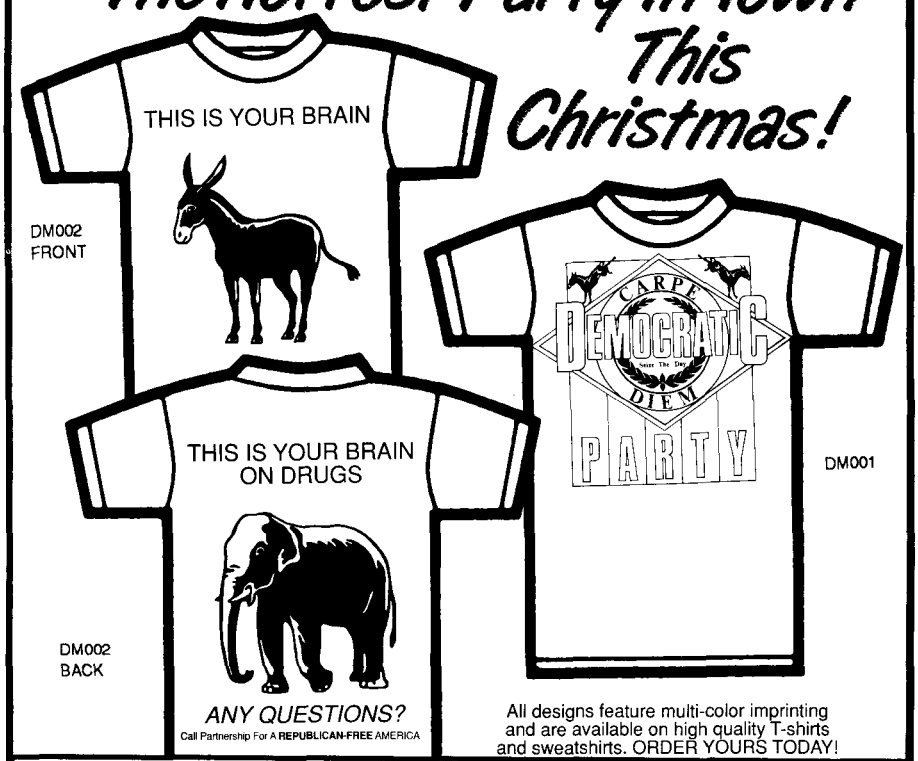

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causing the death of a prisoner, though at his trial he made a strong plea of not guilty. He was only obeying higher officials, he claimed, and they went so far as to reward him for his efforts. "Why did they express their gratitude to me?" he asked. "Why did Shevardnadze himself shake my hand?"

Gamsakhurdia's commentary also implicates Shevardnadze very directly: "The widespread use of torture in the MVD's Remand Prison No. 1 and the Georgian KGB's Remand Prison coincides in time with the tenure of E. Shevardnadze as MVD minister." Block 2 of the first prison had been "built at his command" and was the place where "the most awful tortures were administered: beating with iron bars, insertion of steel needles and rods, hanging people up by their ankles, burning the body with lighted cigarettes, holding people under hot showers, homosexual rape, etc." Numerous examples are given by Tsirekidze, and also, in a well-documented case, by one of his victims, Karlo Tsulaya, who duly "confessed" after going through a few cycles of torture, loss of consciousness, and resuscitation by doctors.

As we have seen, Shevardnadze acknowledges only obliquely the routinization of torture on his watch, adding that "purges of investigation and prison personnel ... did not help." He gives no explanation at all as to why Moscow proceeded to select him as its overall boss of Georgia. Here the former Moscow lawyer Konstantin Simis comes to our aid, helping to fill in the story of Shevardnadze's rapid rise. In *USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society* he recounts how prior to 1972, using MVD staff, Shevardnadze collected detailed evidence of the venality of Vasily Mzhavanadze, the man he was to succeed, over the latter's nineteen years in office. He then presented it to Brezhnev and was soon rewarded with the succession.

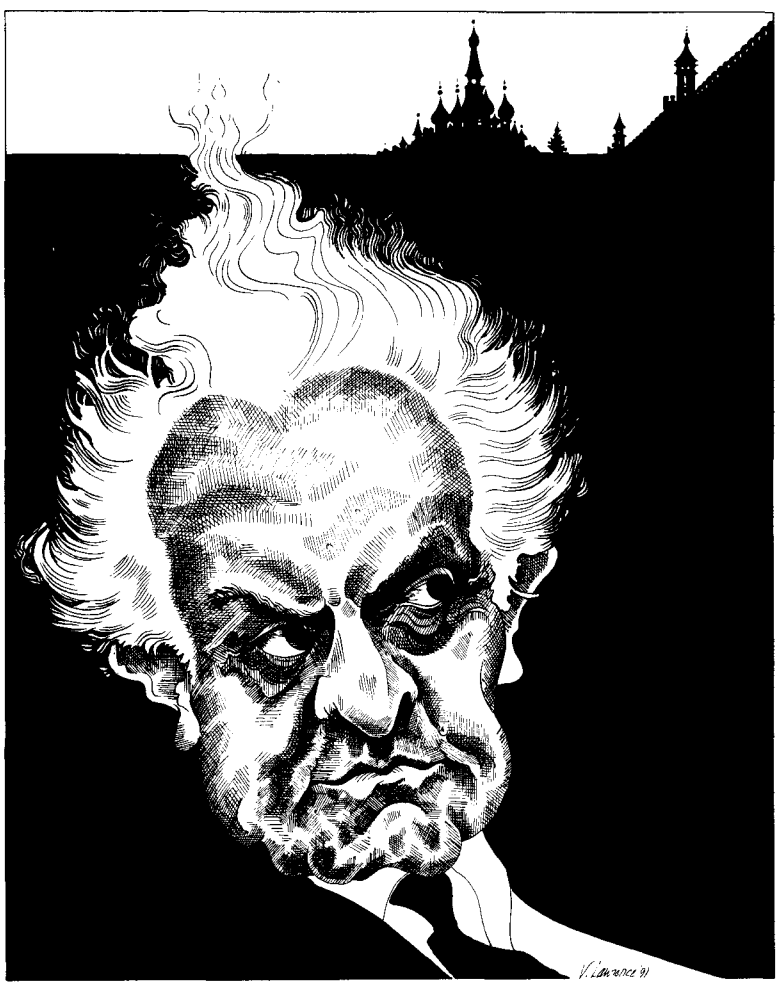
Over the next couple of years according to Simis, Gamsakhurdia, and even the Georgian press—Shevardnadze carried out a series of large-scale, finely calculated actions designed to consolidate his rule. In all, he reportedly had some 25,000 people arrested, including most of Mzhavanadze's entourage and their underworld associates. He stepped up the work of the MVD investigators, who obtained the necessary confessions with their usual methods. And then, having eliminated the danger of revenge from that quarter, he released most of those arrested, without trial, and—as regards the torture—made scapegoats out of Tsirekidze and the five others who were tried.

Clearly such a complex operation could hardly have been executed with kid gloves. Recently, in an open letter published in Georgia, Gamsakhurdia has put forward the following plausible enough explanation of how it was done:

> Although Shevardnadze defeated Mzhavanadze's Mafia and destroyed it, gradually people learned that this was not a fight against the Mafia as a whole, but a fight between Mafia clans. More and more, a second Mafia headed by S. Khabeishvili and G. Mgeladze grew up and prospered, and clearly it was protected by Shevardnadze, who patently closed his eyes to its crimes.

One day, we may hope, Shevardnadze will confront and reply to these charges. Meanwhile, we can only speculate about his motives. Did he feel obliged, for his own security, to be brutal at first, in order thereafter to run Georgia with, by Soviet standards, considerable humanity and moderation? Was this the price that virtue had to pay to vice? Certainly his book suggests strongly that at some point in his life he became committed to avoiding cruelty and bloodshed at almost any cost.

Other aspects of Shevardnadze's thirteen-year rule in Georgia are now less sensitive than the manner in which he launched it. He describes with glee, for example, how he introduced some modest market-oriented reforms into the local economy by labeling them "experiments," thus pulling the wool over the eyes of the Moscow guardians of orthodoxy who frustrated so many of his other goals. He also let Georgia's Jews immigrate quietly to Israel; helped Tengiz Abuladze to produce, and later to release, his powerful film *Repentance*, which satirized Stalinism; and in 1978 got Moscow to go along with his skillful defusing of a mass demonstration in defense of the Georgian language. As for his handling of individual dissidents, he maintains reasonably enough that since the KGB's crackdowns were countrywide and ordered from the top, he could only mitigate them, not prevent them. Still, he says, "I was obligated to protest. At the time, however, in the 1970s, I was not prepared to do so, either inwardly—psychologically—or politically."



EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But in 1984, Shevardnadze recalls, he really did say to Gorbachev: "Everything's rotten. It has to be changed." Their agreement on this, and their long friendship, explain the Georgian's sudden promotion the following year to the posts of Soviet foreign minister and full member of the Party Politburo. At about the same time he was "horrified" by the launching of a major campaign against alcohol, which threatened to devastate Georgia's wine industry: "Perestroika was off to a false start." He confesses out-

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right that "I voted for these decisions, although inwardly I disagreed," and proceeds to scrutinize himself and his motives in a passage that stands as his most revealing reflection on his evolution from Party stalwart to reform leader:

> What was the matter with me? Was it just the discipline of a dedicated "soldier of the party"? Yes, but not entirely. To this day, I can muster the determination to act in an uncompromising way only after a long struggle with myself.... This is a serious drawback for a politician, and for the cause, but I cannot hide it. There is no other way to explain how and why I took so long to reach my present stance.

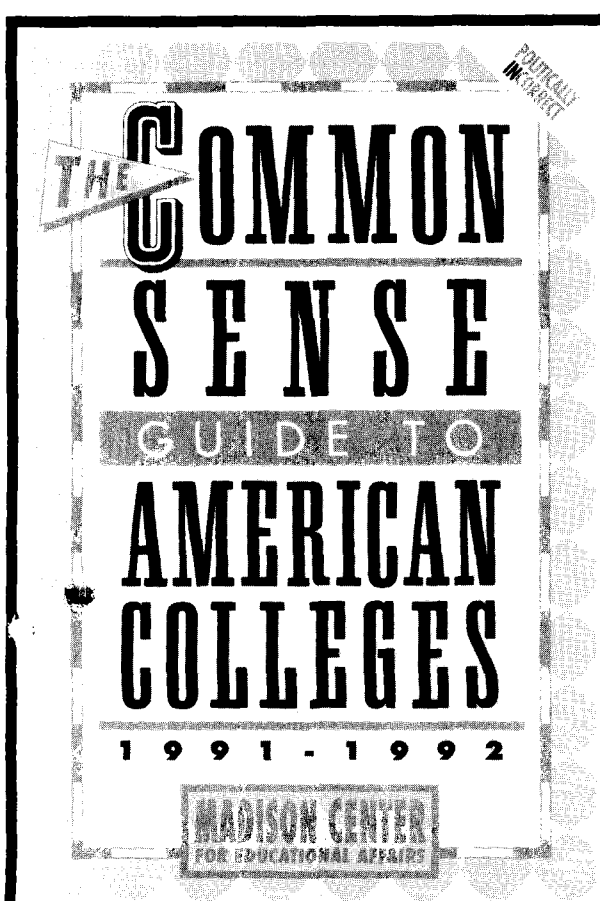
Shevardnadze was an inexperienced and reluctant foreign minister who took the job only because Gorbachev insisted that a completely new voice was needed in foreign policy. He learned quickly, though, and he was soon expounding the regime's "new thinking" with missionary zeal. A sweeping reassessment of the Soviet Union's international predicament informed the new approach to foreign policy:

> We became a superpower largely because of our military might. But the bloated size and unrestrained escalation of this military might was reducing us to the level of a third-rate country, unleashing processes that pushed us to the brink of catastrophe. Our military expenditures as a percentage of gross national product were two-and-a-half times greater than those of the United States.... We have captured first place in the world weapons trade (28 percent of the entire sales total).... But we occupy about sixtieth place in standard of living, thirty-second place in average life expectancy, and fiftieth in infant mortality.

Shevardnadze's criticism pressed beyond geopolitical and economic problems to confront the underlying psychological and moral dilemmas: "A country of socially and politically humiliated people cannot gain security. In such a country a human being is only the means for obtaining security (we might ask: whose?), not the object of that security." To those who would question the new thinking, he replied in the most extreme terms: to abandon perestroika "would doom the country to a final break with world civilization, with all the attendant consequences."

Throughout his book Shevardnadze continually, almost obsessively, indicts and counters his hard-line critics. "It was difficult," he writes, "to persuade even my colleagues on the simplest point: since we had signed the Helsinki Final Act and had assumed obligations under international conventions and agreements, we had thereby acknowledged the right of other participants in these agreements ... to insist that we observe the obligations." The hard-liners would argue: "Let Andrei Sakharov and other prisoners of conscience serve out their sentences. Let the number of refusenik cases pile up, and let the divided families stay divided. Let the 'loony bins' keep on working." Any resulting harm to the Soviet Union's image could easily be repaired: "Some obsequious client, a 'prominent figure' could always be found who would praise Soviet peace initiatives and condemn American imperialism."

Constantly aggravated and sabotaged by the conservatives in his own country, Shevardnadze found deep satisfaction in his diplomatic work with the foreign ministers of other countries. He writes at length of his friendships with George Shultz and James Baker, for both of whom he expresses great professional respect. "I believe it was Bertolt Brecht who said that thought is capable of providing almost sensual pleasure," reflects this defender of new thinking. "No matter how difficult our official meetings, I gained pleasure from conversing with my partners, so uncommon were the form and content of their self-expression." Shevardnadze's exposure to life in the West clearly had a profound effect on him. Indeed, it became a goal of his foreign policy to show



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Soviet people that in countries

> where supposedly "man is a wolf to man," people want to live and do live by normal human laws ... that material sufficiency and life's blessings, attained through judicious enterprise founded on a sense of personal freedom and the ability to work productively, did not at all strip those people of their humanity or ability to empathize with others' troubles.

Shevardnadze proved to be one of nature's diplomats. The dramatic successes of Soviet foreign policy under him and Gorbachev make this sweeping claim of his only slightly exaggerated: "Who will deny that we now maintain decent, normal ties with all countries? We do not have tense, much less hostile, relations with any state." (Shevardnadze seems to forget about erstwhile fraternal Cuba.)

On Eastern Europe, however, Shevardnadze is less than fully frank. He makes clear that Soviet policy was tactfully to encourage the Warsaw Pact leaders to initiate reforms similar to those of perestroika, and he confirms that the more conservative ones balked and hastened to make tacit alliances with Soviet hard-liners behind his and Gorbachev's backs. But he also maintains the pretense that the collapse of Eastern European communism in 1989 caused him little or no consternation, that it fit in with Soviet plans and interests. My own belief is that events in Eastern Europe at first caused him and Gorbachev profound anxiety, which they concealed as they quickly worked out arguments to prove that it served rather than hindered Soviet interests—all in order to minimize their vulnerability to hard-line attacks on such a momentous issue. By contrast, Shevardnadze admits the acute difficulties posed by the rush to German unification in 1990.

Shevardnadze's response to the hard-liners (who said, "You have cost the country its allies and ruined the external security buffer") always showed the same common sense: What alternative policy would they have proposed? In reply he would sometimes hear mutterings about using military force, as in the past. But evidently advocates of such action never succeeded in getting even a serious hearing from the Politburo.

With attractive candor, Shevardnadze recognizes the streak of naïveté in himself, and in his fellow proponents of perestroika, that led him to underestimate the political and social forces arrayed against change:

> I believed that truth was all-powerful, that one need only give it a voice, and it would have its own productive effect. Now I see that I was cruelly mistaken. The productivity of truth largely depends on society's readiness to demand it, and on the state of the hearts and minds of the people who find the courage to disseminate the true word.

Here we see how the mentality of absolute belief in the power of an idea lived on in the Soviet reformers. Previously the idea had been orthodox communism; now it was perestroika. Elsewhere Shevardnadze says: "We fell victim to political illiteracy. We tried to create a new reality by the old methods, sending out directives from above." The consequences were serious: "Inadequate regard for the interests of the establishment ... could not help but provoke a reaction—first dislike of perestroika, then resistance to it."

But about the new methods that supposedly would have worked better, Shevardnadze's argument becomes confused. On the one hand, he says that "the transition to democratic forms of government should have been made smoothly, without friction, not breaking the structures but transforming them gradually." On the other hand, he suddenly implies that the process should have gone much faster. By democratizing the legislature only partially, he argues, the reformers created a situation that "forced us to act while looking over our shoulders, to delay, to take half-measures, to tack against the wind. The moment was lost when we could have relied on truly democratic forces." So did the big mistake lie in acting too quickly or too slowly?

Shevardnadze is also less than realistic about another key issue: relations between the federal center and the republics. It is an issue on which one might expect him to be well armed with cautious skepticism born of experience. He advocates "renewal and reorganization" of the federation, "but only on a basis that will simultaneously ensure both its strength and the authentic sovereignty of its peoples." It is remarkable that a man whose ultimate resignation had its origins in outrage at the federal army's killing of a score of peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi in April 1989 could still think, a few months ago, that this implacable circle of a problem could somehow be squared. In fact, even a year ago authentic sovereignty for the republics inevitably would have involved, at the least, a drastic reduction in the strength of the center.

From the time of the Tbilisi massacre until the coup attempt last August, Shevardnadze says, "a feeling of depression never left me. I was depressed about events in the country, by what was happening around me and within me. My sense of an imminent explosion grew stronger all the time." In December 1990 Shevardnadze dramatically resigned as foreign minister, warning of an "imminent dictatorship," for which, he writes, Tbilisi had been "the dress rehearsal." "It was unbearable to think that if I did not take that step, I would be forced to participate in something that went utterly against my beliefs." This "something" was clearly (though he does not spell it out) the suppression by force of the democratically elected, separatist governments of the Baltic republics, an action that was launched the following month, only to be halted by an eruption of domestic and foreign protest.

The second main reason for Shevardnadze's resignation was the increasingly flagrant sabotaging of his and Gorbachev's arms control policies by hard-liners. His frustration was compounded by Gorbachev's failure to back him up and punish the saboteurs, primarily military leaders who had originally agreed to the policies. Total disarray prevailed at the top. As Shevardnadze portrays it, there was a "power vacuum, anarchy, chaos."

In the spring and summer of this year things became even worse, and Shevardnadze's exasperation with Gorbachev mounted. A hard-line "call to rebellion" appeared in the press, and "men of the highest rank" almost openly "dictated their demands" to Gorbachev "and imposed ultimatums." And yet, with an "increasingly visible reactionary front ... now preparing direct attacks ... what did the president do? He went on vacation." It was characteristic of Gorbachev. According to Shevardnadze, he "always remained deaf to the advice of the people genuinely loyal to him." And when the plotters eventually struck, "the people who defended the president were those he had betrayed, mistrusted, or seen as enemies: Boris Yeltsin, the people of Russia and Moscow, the democratic movements and parties, his former comrades."

Paradoxically, the coup, which had been predicted on its eve by Shevardnadze and other leaders of the newly formed Democratic Reform Movement, came as a relief. "Everything was now manifest and open: names, intentions, deeds." Fortunately, too, "this was a conspiracy of losers." And the losers were speaking "to an audience that no longer existed. Their archaic words were like echoes from the dark caverns of our history." Shevardnadze wrote a statement himself, in which he bravely denounced the junta and, regarding Gorbachev, refrained from "speculation about the degree of his complicity" in its plans—a suspension of judgment that he has

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since maintained. Although he expresses sympathy for Gorbachev, his vivid, emotional description of the coup and the resistance to it is laced with severe criticism of his friend's failings, which, taken together, he calls Gorbachev's "enormous personal tragedy."

Shevardnadze himself is guilty of a far less serious version of Gorbachev's failure to face the facts. He succumbs at times to vapid sentimentality, especially on the subject of the Union. Writing about the resistance, he indulges in an embarrassing peroration to diversity-in-unity, rather than facing the dilemma posed by competing national aspirations: "Oh my dear Russians, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, Uzbekis, Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians—how I love you! How thankful I am that through you I have felt myself truly a part of the people!"

Perhaps Shevardnadze will soon reject not just Stalinism, but communism as such—something he notably fails to do in this book, which one hopes is merely a preliminary sketch for more detailed and frank memoirs later on. And almost certainly he will, at the age of only 63, continue to seek a bigger role than his current leadership of a small association on foreign policy and the larger but problem-ridden Democratic Reform Movement. The latter aimed to operate on a federal scale, but now it finds no federation to operate in. The Georgian scene—with Gamsakhurdia in power—is currently off-limits to Shevardnadze, and anyway it is small potatoes after six years on the world stage. As for the Russian scene, it will hardly be hospitable to a Georgian who has spent most of his life in Georgia. Ironically enough, it may be that Shevardnadze, barred from a role in the increasingly international affairs of the dissolving Soviet Union, may find his niche only in some larger international organization—a gain for the world, but a loss for his country.

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The Birds and the Bee

BY MAVIS GALLANT

Colette: A Life by Herbert Lottman

(Little, Brown, 344 pp., $24.95)

Talent is a shortsighted mythical beast that blunders all over the place. In 1873, in Burgundy, it stumbled on one Sidonie Gabrielle, newborn daughter of Captain Jules Colette, a retired infantry officer, and his wife, known as Sido. The great and future Colette had no inkling of her gift, with its mysterious components of language, memory, and imagination, until she was 20, when she was living in Paris with her first husband, a literary con man who signed "Willy" to the stream of books that he got other people to ghost for him.

Willy is remembered for only one reason: he is supposed to have locked up his bride, after handing her an exercise book and telling her to write about her school days. ("Don't be afraid of spicy details," he said, being Willy.) By her own account Colette was not altogether a prisoner, simply "passive and obedient." She did not need a jailer. She needed a starting point and (in the beginning) a sensible editor. Surprisingly, Willy was exactly that. In *Mes Apprentissages*, a memoir of her early Paris years, she pays wry tribute to his one respectable asset. For the rest, he was a swindler, a defaulter, a habitual liar, a common lecher; and he managed to be both spendthrift and skinflint, throwing money away on his own particular pleasures but refusing to buy his young wife a winter coat.

Colette seems to have made no effort to free herself. She let him take complete or partial credit for six of her books, and might have gone on forever as an unpaid employee in his ghostwriting factory if Willy had not been foolish enough to leave her for a lesser woman. Why did she stay? No one, not even Colette, has been able to make it clear. Her story of their marriage shows a pattern of revulsion and acceptance, of jealousy and fatalism. Her adored mother had married her off, and she was like a child passed from one adult to another, with nothing to say.

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The shabby, marginal, and second-rate Paris into which Willy dragged her shaped an outlook, shaped it far more decisively than the longed-for garden back in Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye and her mother's presence and love. Her father was decent and honest, but he was as improvident as Willy. They were always moving, always broke, and had to be taken in by her half-brother, a doctor, Sido's son from an earlier marriage. No wonder that even in her early photographs Colette's expression is so beyond shock and surprise as to seem inscrutable.

Willy had an exploiter's instinct that drew him not just to genius in bud, but to an untried small-town girl ("innocent" would never be quite the right word for Colette) whose parents showed unusual leniency for their time. She was 16 when Willy began to pay close attention. Four years later, known in Paris as Mme Willy, she had the manners of a puppy, spoke with a strong regional accent that she never lost, wore the unfashionable clothes that were all she owned, and kept her hair in a braid down her back like a schoolgirl. (Jules Renard, the writer and diarist, compared "Mme Willy's plait" to the rope of a well bucket.) Willy knew what he had, even if he did not appreciate it at once: "I was wrong," he said, after reading her first novel, written on order. A few years later, however, he got the manuscript out of a drawer and saw that he had been right.

Colette was born in the same year as St. Thérèse and Marcel Proust, and like them she has never been out of print. She died at 81, esteemed and honored, mourned by crowds of Parisians, many of whom may never have read her books but loved her for having written them—a phenomenon so singularly French that it cannot be explained in terms of any other society. From her early 20s, she had earned a living as a writer of fiction, with interludes as a journalist, a critic, an actress, a traveling music-hall performer, and a manager of a cosmetics shop. She had helped out or supported all three of her husbands: after Willy, Baron Henry de Jouvenel, editor of *Le Matin*, who now has a street named for him in Paris, and Maurice Goudeket, a dealer in precious stones, who went broke. Like Willy, Jouvenel discarded her. She is said to have sunk to her knees when he announced the end of the marriage. (The women in her fiction are tougher.)

Yet it needs to be said that in the guerrilla skirmishes of love, Colette gave as good as she got. She dropped "Missy," the Marquise de Morny, who had offered her a house in Brittany, when she had the chance to marry Jouvenel, and she seduced Jouvenel's young son while she was still living with his father. Until she was elderly, she seems to have lived on the principle that overlapping relationships are inevitable. A few months ago her recorded interviews were broadcast over France-Culture, a state-owned FM station, and once again that incomparable voice explained why Don Juan is both icy and insatiable: because men are envious of the pleasure that women attain in sex. (They resent it, and so they keep trying.) According to Colette's third and considerably younger husband, who wrote a touching book about their years together, she gave up sex only when she decided that it had become "unaesthetic" (her word) because of advancing age.

A few years before her death, Colette looked back and saw that she had lived to a rhythm of deadlines and material need. She was in her 70s before she could afford to write purely for pleasure, without knowing beforehand how much income the work was likely to bring in. By then she could barely write at all. Her hand was misshapen, the result of holding a pen with the weight of the hand on her little finger. The finger could not be straightened now, and the hand, she thought, looked like a kangaroo sitting on its tail. (It takes a Colette to see that exactly.)

A national treasure may be strapped for cash without being hard up for honors. Colette's state funeral, with a flag draped over the coffin, held in the open air at the Palais Royal, where she had lived for years, turned out to be a high occasion for Parisian polemics. Her widower's insistence that she receive a Roman Catholic burial, argued in public, debated in newspapers, resisted to the end by the archbishop of Paris—on grounds of Colette's impenitence, let alone an irreligious life, two divorces, and a body of work condemned by the Church—seemed misguided to some of her friends, and even to people who knew her only through her books. The word most often applied to Colette was, and still is, "pagan." After her death, Goudeket, who was Jewish, converted to Catholicism, which explained some of his anxiety: he must truly and secretly have believed that she was on the way to eternal torment.

Colette has remained a holdout from French writers' purgatory, where all dead French writers are supposed to serve time. In this purgatory they are condemned to carry their own works, by the armload. Lavish editions, coveted in life, turn out to be one more parcel in the never-never. Meanwhile, readers shun their books and forget their names; and if the blackout persists, it is taken for granted the dead author has been sidetracked to oblivion, where there is hardly standing room. But nothing of the sort happened to Colette.

She is read, taught, and remembered. Her collected work is in a Bibliothèque de la Pléiade edition—an honor, not a graveyard, in spite of its cheerless appearance—and individual books and paperbacks are easy to find. Hefty, illustrated volumes that deal with some aspect of her legend continue to appear: Colette and food, Colette and style, Colette and love (the last like something Leporello might have written if he had not settled for making a list). This year's crop of reminders included a long-running exhibition in Paris, intended to show her taste in furnishings and bibelots. Some of the pieces on display were her own; the rest had been lent by decorators and antiques stores. These were heavily suggestive of what Colette should have owned or would have liked, and were part of the made-over image that has survived.

The truth was more limited and less

Last Christmas

We often made angels on your lawn,
watching the bodies fade a little more
each day, until the wings were gone.

Traditions die hard. We had enough
for the "family" recipe: cognac, cream,
a dozen eggs, a box of nutmeg, spice

for garnish. *It was Christ who drank*
the bitter cup. Loving all men,
he gave up his life, you sang.

To the left of your smile, that patch
of KS like a dark flower bloomed
in a field of snow. Yet no one came

to visit. This Christmas at your grave,
no flowers, but maybe a cup of eggnog,
a sprinkle of nutmeg on the snow.

TIMOTHY LIU

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terre-à-terre. In the late '40s the artist and stage designer Jean Hugo was commissioned by *Vogue* to sketch the contents of her famous room, overlooking the Palais Royal garden. "I soon grew tired of drawing the Second Empire furniture, the opaline vases and crystal balls," he would say in his memoirs. The crystal balls actually were paperweights that her admirers kept foisting on her, rather the way her contemporary Franklin Roosevelt had to keep hearing "Home on the Range" because everyone thought he liked it. Colette took no notice of Hugo, but he remembered her saying to a woman friend that men need to be ruled with a whip, and he remembered the roll of her Burgundian accent as she uttered an obscenity.

Visitors to the Palais Royal garden continue to search for the memorial plaque outside her old apartment and stare hopefully at the window, as though expecting to see the enigma of her elderly and unsmiling face, with the frizzle of gray hair, the rouged cheeks and blue-green kohl-rimmed eyes. Some of her later photographs have the look of a Fauve portrait. The face at the window has become softened and sentimentalized in collective memory. It belongs to a wise and indulgent old lady, with an easily forgiven wayward past, which comes to resemble faded Belle Epoque wallpaper and to serve (one supposes) as a background for charming novels, imagined to be about cats and food and love. The least maternal of women has been turned into a Parisian *maman* who wore makeup, made strawberry jam, and, incidentally, composed novels.

In a fit of puritan pique, François Mauriac called Colette a fat bee who had been everywhere. ("*Où ne s'est-elle pas fourrée, cette grosse abeille?*" is still quoted.) Women were not supposed to know quite that much about men, though male writers were believed and expected to know all about everyone. The fat bee Colette flew over fences and deep into secret gardens. But the bee remembered has lost her sting. The old accusations of amorality, of leading impressionable readers to perdition have vanished under the rubble of social change.

The first of the Claudine novels was written almost a century ago. (It is the one that Willy kept in a drawer.) They run a course parallel to her life in Willy's Paris, about the way a road runs next to a railway line. Scandalous in their time and even later, they are bound to seem incorrupt now, and even to have the exaggerated appeal of a quaint decadence, less threatening than ours. Her women complain about headaches rather more often than we are accustomed to hearing, but it may have to do with the amount of ether that they sniff in the long boring stretch of winter afternoons. And in those days women were expected to have something the matter, like those early motorcars that were always on the side of the road.

She exasperated Mauriac, and not only Mauriac, because she wrote too easily, too serenely, and too wittily about adultery, lesbianism, seduction of the young, prostitution (high and low), all without making a moral point, and in prose that no one could fault. She could not, therefore, be dismissed. She can sound in a hurry, but never forced. One can open to any page without finding a dead passage.

She was remote from spirituality, from second thoughts on eternity and the fear of retribution. The worst that can happen in Colette's universe is human betrayal. Two of her male characters commit suicide, none too plausibly, over love gone wrong. (Suicide in fiction often sounds as if a character had run amok: "How can I get myself out of this novel? I know! I'll get a gun!") Her books are remote from politics on any level. She is said to have been as apolitical as one of her cats or dogs.

It may have been true, but perhaps there is no such thing as a wholly apolitical literate adult, particularly in France. During the Occupation, when she was elderly, handicapped with arthritis, and earning a living for two (her Jewish husband was barred from any sort of employment, indeed from living any sort of normal life), she contributed articles to papers that can only be classed as pro-collaboration, and even, in one case, pro-Nazi. She made a patriotic about-face when the Occupation ended, refusing to sign a petition got up by writers to save a collaborationist writer from the firing squad, even though he had been instrumental in saving Goudeket from deportation. (Herbert Lottman deals with the incident squarely, but he does not reveal the name of the writer, whose case is well known and who was executed after a doubtful trial. Probably no trace of his brief contact with Colette remains in documentary form, for she may have pleaded for his help by telephone. In any case, it is an incident around which critics have tiptoed for many years.) This behavior was perfectly consistent with her appreciation of the tangible, observable world, which turned it into a

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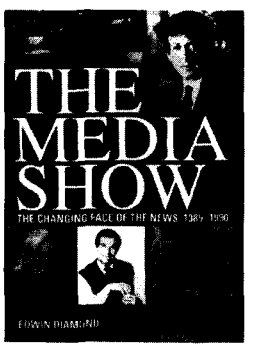

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mythical paradise. Nothing has happened in Colette's books to separate good from evil—not yet.

A streak of cruelty runs through her most seductive work. Animals take precedence over people. She can speak of the "pure look" in the eyes of a lion, as though the idea of impeccability can exist in the kingdom of instinct. In her story "La Chatte," the reader is expected to be firmly on the side of a husband who clearly prefers his white cat to his young wife. The wife's bungled attempt to kill her rival simply confirms that it is a bloody awful marriage, that the husband needs serious treatment for what seems to be an unnatural attachment, the wife perhaps a milder form of counseling for incipient hysteria, and the cat, quite definitely, a saner home. In the nightmare known as "L'Enfant et les sortilèges," which was set to music by Ravel, a one-act opera to which children are sometimes taken on a matinee outing, monstrously oversized insects and animals take disproportionate revenge on a bad boy who has been tormenting them. It would be interesting to know how many small children subjected to this horror have developed a fear of squirrels and dragonflies for life.

Children, her daughter among them, are described not as children—as vulnerable and maddening and touching—but as objets d'art or, more simply, as things. Lottman tells a revealing anecdote about Colette slapping her small daughter, who had fallen down and cut her nose and forehead, saying, "Just let me catch you again spoiling what I created!" Justice exists when animals rise in their own defense. For the rest, crises and encounters are on the same level, whatever the issue, whatever the outcome. In an early novel, *L'Ingénue Libertine,* a young woman experiencing orgasm for the first time moves her head on the pillow "like a child with meningitis." Leaving aside every pertinent objection, keeping in mind only that a child with meningitis is a dying child—this was 1909—we have to suppose that, for the great French literary sensualist of the century, there were no degrees of feeling. "Like" and "unlike" have never been classified, and incongruity has yet to be invented, together with sin.

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In her long lifetime Colette kept few secrets. Or perhaps she kept only one: the true nature of her feelings toward her mother, which may have been more complex and less idyllic than she let readers think. The adored Sido was soon to become a planet, circling a magnetic Colette, loved in retrospect and kept at a distance. Colette seldom brought her mother to Paris and rarely went to see her, and she did not attend her funeral. She had written Sido about 2,000 letters, which her brother destroyed (we do not know why). In "Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye" (the name of the town in Burgundy that Colette left, so reluctantly, for a tawdry life in Paris), she recalls the garden at night and the oil lamp lighting a window, and the shadow of her mother on the blind. Beyond that light and that shadow, "everything is danger, everything is solitude." The threat and the loneliness were contained in her marriage to Willy, entered without joy. After that it was Sido who watched Colette, marveling, admiring, often worrying, but never asked for advice. The young woman who was afraid of the dark probably still existed, perhaps only in a look that an astute observer, years later, saw as "unfulfilled."

Like every writer of fiction, Colette mapped trails through private territory, exactly recalled and perfectly imagined. "See how I've fooled them!" she told one of her husbands after publishing a novel taken to be about them. Her talent as an actress, in no way false, sustained a personality easily understood by outsiders and at one with her work. She seldom refused an interview or gave an unexpected reply to a question: yes, she loved animals, nature, food, the weather, life at first hand. She discussed her personal affairs at dinner parties and once kept a list of words and expressions in dialect, which she would use to delight and to astonish Parisians, though she was not from peasant stock and most likely had never heard such expressions at home.

Between 1922 and 1936 Colette had frequent occasion to be seen and heard by Abbé Mugnier, confessor to half the Catholic writers of Paris and a close friend of Jean Cocteau, who kept a journal. They met at dinner parties—their circle of friends was much the same—and he dined at her house at least once. At 49, her age at their first meeting, she seemed like a child who had never been taught social behavior. She said whatever went through her head, fondled the breasts of another guest, and called her husband "*Mon Chéri*" (the domestic familiarity of the term was an offense against etiquette in that particular world). She asked the abbé if he would baptize her 9-year-old daughter, but nothing came of it. Invited by the Jouvenels, the abbé was given a dog as a dinner partner. Wherever the abbé encountered Colette, she dominated the conversation, talking about herself and whatever happened to be on her plate. "She reduces everything to gluttony," he noted. The abbé read something of hers that was not proscribed, and was enchanted. ("When are you going to write something I may read?" he had complained.) Where Mauriac saw a fat and shameless bee, the abbé began to see "a divine wasp, eating sugar cake." He also saw in her expression something that he defined as hard and unfulfilled.

In a black-and-white documentary film that dates from the late 1940s, and that most television viewers must have seen at least once, Colette sits up in bed and examines the basket of fruit and vegetables her cook has brought home from the market. She picks out a large onion, unwashed, unpeeled, and bites into it. Her comments are strongly accented and more growled than spoken. This scene is one of the best known elements of the Colette myth. No wonder so many writers were able to gather up just a few pieces, shuffle them, and deal the familiar pattern! In one of the radio interviews heard this year, recorded in her 70s, she seemed to be trying to disentangle her life from her image, most particularly from her fiction and from the Claudine novels. Unfortunately, it was too late, and the best she could manage was, "I don't remember," and "It was all so long ago." At that point, Colette may have forgotten how she had once fed the illusion, fostered the Claudine craze in Paris, worn the Claudine dress with the white Claudine collar—how she had once *been* Claudine, at Willy's behest.

Willy was absent, though these were precisely the books he had claimed as his own; he even had sold the rights for a lump sum, which he pocketed. It is impossible to see any trace of him in "Renaud," the husband of Claudine. At 34, his age when he married Colette, he was stout, bald, and whiskered, had the swollen eyes of a gormandizer and bore a resemblance, by no means flattering, to Edward VII. If he was Renaud, or even a part of Renaud, then Colette was correct in insisting that she was nowhere. For the rest, she indicated some resent-

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ment at being chased like a hare across the field of her work, though until now she had never seemed to mind. "One grows weary of everything, even of keeping quiet," she wrote at about that time.

We know about Colette, or we believe that we do (her "See how I've fooled them!" should never be out of mind). She was drawn, photographed, filmed, recorded, interviewed, and observed more than any other French writer, with the exception of Simone de Beauvoir and, probably, Sartre. She rarely eluded a direct question and was willing to talk about herself to someone she was meeting for the first time. Why is it, then, that no biographer seems able to find Sidonie Gabrielle Colette in that great mass of information and to bring her to life? About twenty years ago Margaret Crosland nearly succeeded with a critical biography, *Colette: The Difficulty of Loving*, but it was marred by her prudish refusal to accept Colette's bisexual nature. (Colette never tried to conceal her affairs with women.)

Lottman's scrupulous and careful book raises a different sort of question. What impels an experienced biographer to spend time with a writer for whose work he seems to feel no affinity, and whose mind and outlook are wholly at odds with his own? Lottman has published five other books on French literary and political topics. (His study of Albert Camus is still the best in English.) But his general approach, which is tactful, cautious, fair, and sometimes oddly unfeeling, has served him better with Flaubert or Phillippe Pétain. Colette evades him.

Colette, A Life is not so much a botched book as a failed wedding trip. Colette got down from the train at the first stop, leaving her luggage behind; and Lottman has been able to describe the contents, but not the fugitive. Perhaps it would be useful to emphasize what this book is not: it is not part of the plague of oversized, shapeless, sodden sponges, dripping random facts, that now pass as an account of a writer's life. In those books the facts can be irrelevant and nasty and often absurd. Their effect is to turn readers away from the writer's work, and to make them feel thankful that they suppressed their own adolescent urge to write in favor of a worthier life. In this biography, by contrast, Herbert Lottman has included no more than he needs, and stopped where he should. The only thing missing is Colette.

MAVIS GALLANT is the author most recently of *In Transit* (Random House), a collection of stories.

TRB *continued from page 4*

the market about what investments will pay off, and that it can outsmart lawyers and accountants who will manipulate such rules to defeat their purpose.

When I was in college there used to be something called "liberal jokes." This was a time, children, when liberals were widely held in contempt from the left. If black activists across the country were screaming "Free Bobby Seale" (an alleged black martyr of the era), a liberal would be someone who proposes the slogan "Parole Bobby Seale." That's a liberal joke. Maybe you had to be there. But my point is that the slogan "*targeted* capital gains tax cuts"—as proposed by Lloyd Bentsen, Bill Clinton, Mario Cuomo, and other Democrats—is a liberal joke for the '90s.

The only good reason for a tax break now is simply to give a deserved break to the middle class. In a democracy, the fact that this is politically appealing need not be thought of as a fatal defect. Of the two frankly middle-class breaks on the table—a Social Security cut, and a family credit—either will suffice. If your hope is to have some effect on job creation, the Social Security cut is more appealing, since the payroll tax is a direct tax on jobs. On the other hand, families are in political fashion, and the value of the family exemptions has badly eroded over the past few decades. A payroll tax cut would benefit all workers, even those too poor to pay income taxes. To spread the benefits of a family credit similarly would require a complicated rebate arrangement. But, as I said, either will do.

As for column two—method of payment—simply adding to the deficit is clearly wrong. Hoping to pay for a tax cut by slicing defense is also slightly suspect, since everyone knows that defense will have to be cut more than currently planned just to meet current budget targets. And if there is a real peace dividend, either reducing the deficit or spending it on needed government investment might seem a more responsible course. So that logic dictates going for a tax increase on the wealthy.

But there we go, falling into the responsibility trap ourselves. True irresponsibility would be enacting a tax cut that wasn't paid for. Paying for it with revenue from genuine spending cuts that might otherwise be put to a wiser use barely nudges the irresponsibility meter, compared with what Republicans have done during the past decade. Once every ten or twelve years, surely, the Democrats are entitled to indulge themselves.

Agree? Write Rosty.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

to be productive and prosperous, and if given the chance, many would turn out to be successful entrepreneurs. Ms. Rosenberg badly underestimates the effect of removing the huge bureaucratic barriers. The economy and standard of living would accelerate, similar to the 7 percent annual growth rate found for many years in Chile.

Ms. Rosenberg recommends a litany of government-sponsored programs—technical assistance, lending programs, and better infrastructure—then goes into what can only be called a wish list of additional liberal government programs, the funding for which simply isn't available. These programs, if publicly funded, would immediately be co-opted by the existing corrupt system and would never benefit its intended recipients. This is what Mr. DeSoto means by "burning down the hospital": you need to tear down the old system to give people the freedom to earn their own money.

I have seen uneducated Brazilians from the worst of slums enter the United States and succeed immediately—not because of our programs but because there is opportunity. The vast majority of persons around the world simply need to be free to exercise their own talents and hard work. This is a simple, unscholarly truth, the type of truth with which liberals so frequently have problems.

RICHARD C. CLEMENT
Watertown, Massachusetts

First lawyer

To the editors:

I too am tired of the nauseating likes of Mrs. Bush, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Johnson, et al., who misspent their adulthood married to only one man and who gave all of their time to raising a family rather than pursuing a more enlightening career (Notebook, October 21). Their lack of a professional standing only allowed them to give of their time to mostly charitable causes and other works that called attention to some of the nation's ills. How uninspiring compared with the example of accounting, doctoring, CEOing, etc., that a careerist First Lady would provide! Your specific noting that three of the Democratic candidates' wives are attorneys is especially gratifying. An attorney First Lady would make the executive couple complementary to Congress, where a large majority of the members are also attorneys. These paragons of virtue have certainly served as excellent role models for their profession.

ERWIN A. REINHARD
San Antonio, Texas

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Primordial ooze

I WISH SOMEONE WOULD STOP Jack Healey before he destroys Amnesty International. In recent years Healey has wrestled the estimable organization away from its mission of quiet, effective case work on behalf of prisoners of conscience and turned it over to a clique of humor-impaired pop icons. One former staff member tells me Healey became bored with the worthy "old" Amnesty. This became apparent a few years ago when he organized the Conspiracy of Hope concerts with Peter Gabriel, Sting, and Bono. It got worse during the multicontinent "Human Rights Now!" tour in 1988. To the chagrin of many of its longtime members, these promotions trivialized AI's seriousness of purpose and diluted the precise, discrete idea of human rights at the heart of its work. To pay for the event, Healey secured sponsorship from Reebok, which capitalized on the association with an ad campaign based on "free expression." The thousands who attended the concerts and joined up were well meaning, but they tended to identify with the panoply of causes championed by the musicians, from the Brazilian rain forests to world hunger, AIDS, and homelessness in the United States. And most of the money they paid for admission went not toward case work or research, but for a fancy new building on Capitol Hill.

THE NEW ISSUE OF *SPIN*, GUEST-edited by Healey, evidences a continued cheapening of the Amnesty idea. One feature promotes The Body Shop, a chain that sells enviro-friendly soaps and cosmetics, and advertises AI on its recycled paper shopping bags. It quotes Anita Roddick, who owns the company, to the effect that human rights is "at the heart of social and environmental change." Elsewhere in the issue Jackson Browne interviews Wilma Mankiller, the chief of the Cherokees, who says that cultural survival is a human rights issue, and claims there are Native American political prisoners in the United States. Amnesty International doesn't recognize any such, but Healey has apparently transcended petty considerations such as who is and isn't a legitimate political prisoner. The cover story is an interview with the skinhead pop-star Sinéad O'Connor, who believes that violations of human rights, like all of the world's other problems, arise from child abuse. She is also mad at Madonna for saying O'Connor looked like she had a run-in with a lawn mower. Healey himself contributes puffy interviews with his close friends Peter Gabriel and Wynton Marsalis. He also includes a short testimonial to Muhammad Ali, whom he praises for "his fight for human rights throughout the world." What this might consist of is not elucidated; Healey only mentions Ali's participation in a benefit for hunger in 1976. It would be nice if Amnesty went back to worrying about human rights. The problem is that Jack Healey doesn't seem to remember what they are.

ONE OF THE BEST things about *The Wall Street Journal* is its delightfully loopy editorial page. Like kids who have been to too many Black Sabbath concerts or done too many drugs, its editors have become deaf to the subtler gradations of rhetoric. They always turn up the stereo to 10. But never in the years I've been appreciatively reading it has the paper been quite so hysterical as during the Thomas-Hill hearings. On October 8 the editors cranked up a diatribe titled "Bork Got Off Easy." As usual, the dominant metaphor was one of sludge. "His enemies couldn't stop Clarence Thomas, so they dove deeper into the muck for the newest slime, Sex Harassment," they wrote. "This smear says more about the toxic dump that is today's Senate than anything about Judge Thomas." Reporters investigating the Thomas story were foraging in a "garbage dump." A few days later, if the Senate defeated Thomas, it would "be responsible for whatever dark racial resentment flows in the aftermath of a lynching." Paul Gigot added in a signed column: "It is hard in this week of nauseating meanness to choose the most sickening moment." Gigot overcame his indecision and chose the first time Ted Kennedy opened his mouth. But the day the editors blew out the speakers was October 14, when they called the hearings "The Senate's Tiananmen Square." (They were saving Hiroshima, Auschwitz, and the Bataan death march in case Thomas was actually defeated.) "We shall see," the editors wrote, "if the senators now order the tanks to roll over one man standing bravely in the street yelling stop." I imagine the *Journal*'s editorial board as shell-shocked WWI veterans, running through the office screaming, with their hands clapped over their ears as they flash back to the Bork battle. The Senate, they added, was "sinking into the primordial ooze of Long Dong Silver." I'm not sure what that is. But yuck.

ONE CURIOUS POST-HEARING PHENOMENON is the spread through the Senate of Regrets Syndrome. Like Tourette's, a neurological disorder that causes its victims to spew unintended obscenities, the current epidemic has members of the Senate Judiciary Committee bursting out in spontaneous fits of apology. The most recent victims are Ted Kennedy and Alan Simpson, who appear to have caught the disease in the conventional way: prolonged exposure to negative publicity in proximity to an upcoming election. Last week Kennedy appeared at the Kennedy School of Government to apologize for disappointing his friends and supporters—how exactly, he didn't explain. "To them I say: I recognize my own shortcomings—the faults in the conduct of my private life. I realize that I alone am responsible for them, and I am the one who must confront them." A day later Simpson, who has been catching hell from feminists for his belligerent treatment of Anita Hill, and who exacerbated matters by telling Barbara Bush, at his wife's birthday party, that never in his wildest dreams when he was 20 did he think he'd ever be sleeping with a 60-year-old woman, caught the bug in Wyoming. Simpson said it was "personally uncomfortable" to see his "good name equated with McCarthy, sleaze, slime, smarmy, evil, ugly [been reading the *Journal*?], mean-spirited, slasher, vindictive, menacing and much, much more." Simpson continued: "I do not blame the media for anything, nothing. I do not blame activist feminine groups for anything, nothing. They're blameless. The responsibility is mine and I shall handle it and handle it well." The formula of both men was similar: admit nothing specific, take the rap in a vague sort of way, and vow to do better in the future. Of course, there's always the possibility that these apologies are not politically motivated, but rather deeply heartfelt expressions of self-doubt. Right.

JACOB WEISBERG

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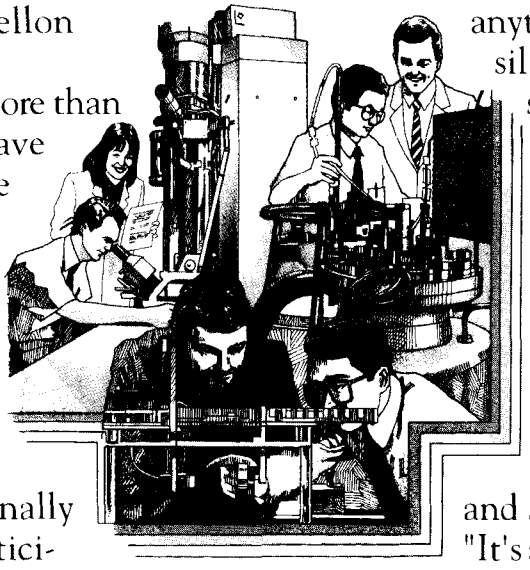

For Dr. C.A. Cain, chairman of the University of Michigan's Bioengineering Program, HIVIPS proved a welcome sabbatical. "For the first time in years, I was able to pursue new ideas without interruption," he says. "In my time there, I basically defined my research directions for the next five years."

HIVIPS participants were struck by the effort to make them feel at home in Japan. "One of the nicest things about the program was the friends I made," says Dr. Cain. "We still do joint research and exchange visits," he adds.

HCRL's research facilities impressed the visitors. "I could do just about anything to a piece of silicon that I wanted to," says John Snyder, a Stanford University doctoral student in electrical engineering, who worked on a new kind of transistor. The visitors also appreciated the natural beauty of HCRL's campus,with its goldfish-stocked lake and sheltering woodlands. "It's an oasis of calm in Tokyo," says Dr. Cain.

Hitachi is proud to sponsor the HIVIPS program. We believe that it can make a significant contribution to science, to its participants' lives, and to a better understanding between the U.S. and Japan.

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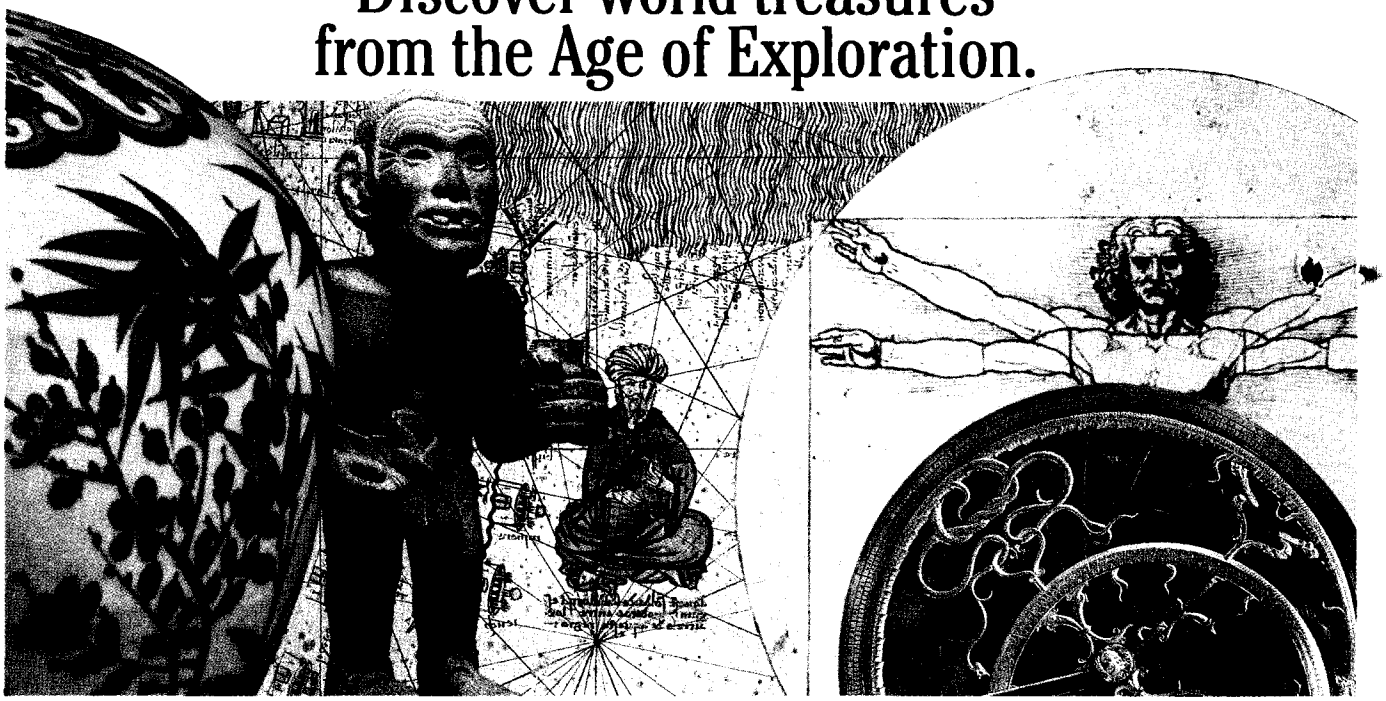

Credits from left to right, details of: Blue and White Porcelain Jar with Plum and Bamboo Decorations, Ho-Am Art Museum, Kyunggi-Do, Korea; Xiuhtecuhtli as an Old Man, CNCA-INAH, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City; Atlas Catalan, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice; Astrolabe of Alphanus Severus, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

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